BUSINESS ETHICS:

THE PROCESS OF MAKING

A MORAL DECISION

IN THE WORKPLACE

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This research investigates the process of making a moral decision in the workplace, the influences upon it and the nature of its structure. Existing literature is reviewed relating to the nature of a decision, theories of moral philosophy and the psychology of individual moral development and the influence of membership of groups and organisations. Supported by a social constructionist methodology, sixteen informants are interviewed and involved in producing a cognitive map of a particular decision which they have made within their employment situation. Their narratives and their maps are then analysed. Four themes emerge relating to gender, emotions, virtues and membership of communities. On gender, general support is indicated of Gilligan's theory relating to ethics of justice (predominantly male) and of care (predominantly female). The process of cognitive mapping highlights the way in which informants tend to include their emotions around their decision as an acceptable influence within the context of the overall situation. At the same time, informants refer frequently to the need to be virtuous in some respect, confirming the key principles of virtue theory. Finally, the decisions shared with the researcher demonstrate that the difficulties of the decisions relate to the influence of being members of different communities and serve to emphasise the tension that often exists between an individual with her personal values and her employing organisation which requires her to conform to behaviour which is underpinned by conflicting values. This research seeks to illuminate the subject in a holistic way, using a qualitative approach and aiming to avoid the compartmentalisation of elements of influences within the whole process of making a moral decision in the workplace, an inevitable result of using the more dominant quantitative methods within current business ethics research. In doing so, it demonstrates that there is no one specific identifiable process and that there are many different ways of making such a decision.

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Introduction

The fact that this was people's livelihoods, everything that they knew to be secure in their work terms was all being thrown out of the window it appeared on the whim of three or four people in the board room, you know, and I found that very difficult. It was hard to do my job because it was hard not to tell them what was happening because I felt quite strongly that they had a right to know and that it was, to some degree, it was more than my job was . . . (Joanne)

Joanne was working as a human resources (HR) officer. She was employed by a public body which was transferring some of its business, together with related personnel, to another organisation. She was concerned about the terms of that transfer and that the employees affected by it should be kept informed of its impact on such issues as terms and conditions of employment and pensions. She found herself in the situation of knowing more than she could pass on, having to keep "confidential" information from those adversely affected by decisions being made by the board of the organisation. Her degree of discomfort is evident in the above quotation. Such situations as encountered by Joanne are not unusual and employees throughout the world have to cope with such problems and the conflicts that they create in terms of finding the "right" thing to do. Yet, how does she resolve this decision? What are the processes and skills that she uses to make a decision in such circumstances? When there is a conflict between her own feelings about what ought to happen in the situation and how her employers are instructing her to behave, which has the greater influence?

It is these types of situation which I have sought to explore in greater depth. As a manager in the voluntary sector, I had been used to working with colleagues in a relationship where they were either paid to work in the same organisation or were giving their skills and experience as volunteers. All were responsible to me and we were all responsible for providing an excellent

quality service to the local community which we served. Thus, in most cases, being in the voluntary sector gave the organisation a higher profile in terms of principles and values. We knew the "rules of the game" in working with members of the public, why we were doing what we were doing and the way that we should behave within that context to our clients and to our colleagues. However, the problems which I found myself deliberating on the most related, firstly, to people and their welfare and, secondly, contained some element of conflict of guiding principles. For example, I had to decide what to do about a long-serving volunteer whose quality of work was no longer of an acceptable standard. Two principles were in conflict – "our clients deserve a certain minimum standard of service" and "the organisation offers support and opportunity for personal development to its staff both paid and voluntary". The thought processes in deciding how to approach this problem were ad hoc, at times emotive and, it appeared, non-logical. There was no objective formula to be applied in that situation. The factors that were involved appeared to come from a range of influences. No one specific ethical theory seemed to be suited and applicable. Academic literature around the subject focussed on parts of the process but not the whole and, where it attempted to consider the total it seemed to be one step away from what might actually happen in practice. The theoretical use of questionnaires or hypothetical situations did not seem to me to be reaching the reality of making a moral decision in the workplace.

The aim and objectives of this research project have been devised in the light of the above experience. The overall aim is to explore the process of making moral decisions in the workplace with a view to enlightening others using a method which enables the project to take a holistic approach, rooting the research in the totality of an individual's experience set in its social and historical context. The subsidiary objectives are to identify the nature of the decision-making process, the way individuals come to assess the moral content and work with it and, finally, the various influences upon people in such situations. At the same time, the question is asked "how do the moral strategies used by people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries compare

with philosophical theory as it has developed around moral and ethical issues?".

It is important to "fit" this work into a perspective which embraces existing research and, in order to do this, I highlight here four recent articles which are pertinent, firstly because they touch on part of the aim of this project and, secondly, because they demonstrate current approaches to the research questions. Douglas et al (2001) investigated the nature of the relationship between organisational culture, ethical orientation, individual values and professional codes on moral judgements in the workplace. They used vignettes and questionnaires to work with accountants and used quantitative research methods to establish that judgements are affected by personal values, ethics instruction and professional codes of conduct as well as by the nature of the corporate ethical culture. Using a method involving theoretical scenarios and questionnaires, Kujala (2001) sought to relate type of ethical theory approach to the ethicality of the scenarios and found a wide range of ethical theory being used in practice. Lovell (2002) examined actual moral situations at work, investigating a sample of HR managers and accountants within organisations about particular incidents with which they had been involved. He recognised the gap between moral intention and action and sought to overcome it. His research team hypothesized about the nature of the process of a moral decision involving three key variables (personal autonomy, intensity of issue and support of others). They saw these variables as being informed by society norms, organisational influence and individual values. They sought to categorize the nature of the situation into eight different types ranging from neutrality to cynicism, including puzzles and dilemmas and they recognised that, as situations progress, their category could change depending on events.

They drew a distinction between individual moral agency and "pragmatic responses to ethics at work" (Lovell, 2002, p150) and in many of the cases there was an underpinning acquiescence to the behaviour of senior management. One element which emerged was the influence arising from professional codes which urged professionals to challenge colleagues in the

interests, for example, of patient welfare. They were particularly concerned with the coping strategies of their informants. In ten of the fifteen cases which they examined, informants had resolved their personal conflict through taking a stance of ethical cynicism involving convincing themselves that resolution of the problem was not their responsibility but that of others. What appears to have surprised Lovell's team was the extent of this type of amoral behaviour within organisations which they had believed to be at the forefront of quality and principled actions. They included two hospital trusts and a leading international "caring" charity.

Finally, the fourth relevant recent work to mention is that of Paolillo and Vitell (2002). Using two scenarios and a questionnaire sent to a sample of business managers, they sought to establish the significance of the influence of individual and organisational factors as well as the degree of moral intensity within a given situation. They found no influence of personal or organisational factors on an individual's ethical intentions but found a significant influence within the nature of the moral question itself. They themselves were very surprised at this result and suggested that the scenarios used were very issue-related and therefore influenced their respondents to a greater extent. Again, the investigation involved quantitative methods.

These four articles exemplify current research around the process of a moral decision in the workplace. My approach is distinct from these in taking an essentially qualitative perspective and seeking to maintain a picture of the "whole" while examining its detail. They serve at this point to highlight the nature of current literature against which this piece of work needs to be seen. However, before commencing this process, there are some commonly used terms which need clarification and definition.

The words "moral" and "ethical" are used sometimes interchangeably within different contexts. I intend to be specific and consistent in my usage. Peter Singer (1994) raises the question of definitions in considering the linguistic derivations of the words "ethics" and "morality". He makes the point that they both come from a word meaning "customs" – in Greek, the term from

which we get "ethos" and in Latin, for morality, "mores". He differentiates between "ethics" as being the study of the philosophy of right and wrong and "morality" being any society's view of what is right and wrong. However, when the adjectives are applied, rather than the noun, then "ethical" becomes society's view of what is right and "moral" describes the notion of "rightness and wrongness". To give an example, we might say "it is not *ethical* to falsely claim one's expenses at work" but the question of whether or not to cheat one's expenses is a *moral* question. The study of why it is or is not right to steal from an employer is the study of *ethics*. It would be society's common view of *morality* that it is considered to be wrong to steal from one's employer. The distinction is therefore made between the evaluative judgement of whether something is right or wrong and the concept of right and wrong as the description of a theoretical construct. The nouns "morality" and "ethics" apply to these respectively while they are reversed when the adjectives are applied. It follows that I am researching *moral* decisions in the workplace. These are decisions which have a moral element within them in terms of involving judgements about what it is right to do and what is wrong.

I maintain that this project falls within the academic field of *business* ethics. However, I take a broad view of what is meant by "business". While one's construct of business might only relate to organisations whose aim is to make a financial profit, I also intend to include those not-for profit organisations which employ personnel such as government departments, local authorities, educational establishments and some parts of the independent/voluntary sector. The common factor is that individuals are employed in paid work.

The purpose of the thesis is *descriptive*. It seeks to capture a shared reality with informants of what has happened when they have made a moral decision in the workplace, the nature of that process and the influences that came to bear on it. C L Stevenson (1963) differentiates between descriptive, normative and analytical ethics. Descriptive ethics *describes* what people have considered to be good or bad. Normative ethics involves making judgements about the justice of a particular law or the value of a type of

conduct. It refers to overriding principles such as Bentham's greatest happiness principle or the categorical imperative of Kant. Analytical ethics, according to Stevenson, seeks to consider the nature of normative ethics in order to identify the arguments and principles with which its conclusions might be supported. In taking a descriptive approach, the purpose of this project is not to make judgements about the rightness or wrongness of particular individuals' decisions. Rather, it is to paint a picture of how employees embrace and deal with problems at work that contain a moral element within them.

The aim of the thesis is to take a historical descriptive perspective on the psychological processes of making a moral decision in the workplace which involves examining actual decisions made by individuals in their recent past. At the same time, it takes account of philosophical theory in comparing how informants saw their own line of reasoning within their decision. If ethics is about ensuring that a specific process of thinking takes an individual to an ethically acceptable resolution, then that theory is compared with the methods used by employees in seeking the "right" thing to do. If it is about prescribing, then this thesis sets out to be non-judgemental and relativistic in its approach. This descriptive analysis is criticised by Hugh Wilmott.

> The coherence of descriptive ethics is challenged on the grounds that it relies upon the assumption that accounts of the world can exist in a relation of externality to what these accounts claim to describe. (Wilmott, 1998, p79)

Wilmott maintains that descriptive ethics dissolves into normative ethics because it is impossible to separate truth from values. However, if one suspends value judgements then all moral conclusions become a form of truth. An example of when this situation occurs is in relation to Bob who is regularly cheating his employers. It is a form of truth that he is doing this and can be described as such while omitting any evaluative judgement on the ethicality of his actions. This is what this thesis aims to do. It aims to explore the values used by individuals at work when faced with a moral

decision without imposing judgements upon their ethicality. In the same publication, Martin Parker is more supportive of the descriptive approach.

> If we accept this social construction of the ethical, rather than insist on some form of trans-historical foundation, then this effectively presses upon us a suspension of our judgement, an attempt to go beyond any metaphysics of good and evil and gesture at relativism in the interests of a thicker description. Rather than entering into the hurly-burly of prescriptive argument we might attempt to see how others reach their conclusions about good and bad. Not of course that we can ever do this in some final sense, but rather that this is what we would like to think of ourselves doing in order that we could ' do justice' to those 'others'. (Parker, 1998a, p285).

The area of research of this project falls under the general heading of "business ethics". By that is meant conduct relating to right and wrong within a business setting. Here, I take the widest definition of "business" in terms of its relation, firstly, to the management of money (whether for profit or working within a defined budget of expenditure) and, secondly, to embrace the relationship between employer and employee. Chryssides and Kaler (1993) offer a detailed history of the discipline of business ethics and what it means in practice. I shall explore the nature of the relationship between ethics and business in greater detail in Chapter Nine.

At this point, I wish to draw attention to the current characteristics of descriptive research within business ethics, much of which can be found published within issues of the *Journal of Business Ethics*. Articles from that publication tend, in the main, to draw on research conducted with methods which derive from a scientific/psychological tradition of investigation. Most are deductive, taking hypotheses and testing them empirically, and the hypotheses usually refer to one particular factor within the moral decision in the workplace. This type of work is demonstrated by the work of Roozen et al (2001) which epitomises the modernistic quantitative approach to descriptive ethics which appears to pervade in the paradigm of business

ethics. They seek to research the relationships between the various influences which they identify relating to organisational commitment, individual values, the relative ethicality of an employee and such socio-demographical factors as age, gender and income. Questionnaires were sent out to university alumni. In particular, what they refer to as "ethicality" was tested through giving respondents nine profiles relating to the type of ethical profile of a decision process of an employee. They conclude that the most ethical employees are young, with a relatively low income, limited work experience and with a low level of responsibility in the company. Employees working within public and educational fields appear to be more ethical then those working in the 'private' sector. As far as age is concerned, they conclude specifically that the older an employee, the less likely they are to be "ethically concerned" (Roozen et al, 2001, p96). I will argue that such research methods as demonstrated tend to "sterilise" the question to such an extent that it is distorted away from any shared reality. It fails to acknowledge the intricate complexity of such decisions and the relative influences. Further, in assessing "ethicality", it requires research informants to indicate their judgements on a theoretical basis. I will explore theory around the divergence between what might be decided in theory and carried out in action. My own purpose is to examine moral decision-making in a holistic way, maintaining the historical and social perspectives as an intrinsic framework for the decision itself.

Some research within business ethics has also attempted to relate "mainstream" philosophical theory to practice within a business setting. Sligo and Stirton (1998), for example, conclude that there was little relation between decisions taken in the workplace and theories relating to rights, justice and utilitarianism. On the other hand, Butterfield et al (2000) found that managers tended to argue along deontological and virtue theory lines rather than consequentialist. Whether this is the case or not will be tested by this empirical research.

I seek to investigate the nature of a *process*, the process of making a moral decision. The word "process" implies that there is continuity from a start,

through a middle part, to an ending and that these are discrete and identifiable. I also wish to find out the nature of the influences on that process. Various attempts have been made to draw up a model of the decision-making process when faced with a moral question in the workplace. Writers have built on and modified the models of others, adding different factors and attempting to test the validity of the models. Such examples can be found within Ferrell and Gresham (1985), Hunt and Vitell (1986), Trevino (1986), Trevino and Youngblood (1990), Jones (1991), Herndon (1996), Street et al (1997) Malhotra and Miller (1998), Cole et al (2000). Parts of the process within the various models include individual and organisational factors, opportunity, "significant others" (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985), and industry and cultural norms (Hunt and Vitell, 1986). Thomas Jones (1991) identifies four elements within a process as being (1) recognising a moral issue, (2) making a moral judgement, (3) establishing a moral intent and (4) engaging in moral behaviour. He theorised that organisational factors would influence the last two elements. Street et al (1997) added the concept of escalating factors to Jones' model while Cole et al (2000) tested the Hunt and Vitell model. Malhotra and Miller (1998) refer to five stages within a process relating to awareness, perception of dilemma, ethical judgement, determination and actions. Thus, within this study, questions will arise in relation to the nature of the process of making a moral decision in the workplace. Does it have a beginning, middle and end as implied by the above writers? Are the factors identified above significant influences within the decision?

The general weakness of the approach of these writers relates to the use of quantitative methods without apparent regard to a qualitative perspective and it will be argued in this thesis that the investigation of such human processes is better met through other means more suited to the questions in hand. This project's aim will be to capture the experience of making moral decisions and to learn from it in such a way that the "whole" is maintained without unnecessary dissection or distortion. A social constructionist framework is adopted while rejecting the approach of grounded theory. However, it retains an element of induction in that work with informants was carried out

with as few preconceptions as might be possible and with a view to "opening up" the decisions to expose the detail of their fabric. The problems associated with detailed textual analysis are outlined in terms of the resulting tendency to lose the historical and social perspectives of the informants' stories. Having established the methodology, the research methods are described in terms of the principles of cognitive mapping and narrative analysis (Chapter Three). Chapter Four details the methods of working with the project's informants.

In considering the first objective of the project, the nature of a decision is explored within the context of the existing literature and evidence which emerged from the experience of working with individuals and the story which they brought to me (Chapter Five). In line with the second research objective, I then focus on the individual and, in Chapter Six, I examine the literature on how she gains the ability to identify and work through a situation with a moral dimension. Theories of cognitive moral development are described and criticised in the light of the project's experience in working with informants. Issues relating to gender differences are considered in Chapter Seven. Do men and women differ in the way they approach moral judgements? If so, what difference does their gender make? Comparisons are made based on the evidence gathered from informants with existing theory on the subject. This takes me to consider the third objective of this project which relates to identifying influences on an individual when they are in the process of making a moral decision in the workplace. Three themes emerge and the first influence identified relates to the nature of emotions. The informants express a range of emotions in relation to the decisions which they bring to the project and how they affect and influence the decisions is explored. This raises the question of whether moral judgements are "rational" and philosophical theory around the role of emotions and reason within a moral decision is outlined.

The second influence to emerge is that of the concept of virtues. The way that informants themselves refer to particular ways of behaving (for example, being loyal or being fair) as being something to aspire to is described before

outlining the theory of virtue ethics. Comparison between the practice and the theory raises questions relating to the teleological/deontological nature of virtue ethics theory (Chapter Eight).

Finally, an individual's membership of communities is recognised as an influence on moral decision-making in the workplace in terms of her relationship with an employing organisation and with groups. Membership of different communities becomes significant not only when we ask ourselves "Where do we get our moral values from?" but also when it comes to a particular decision to be made and we have various communities of which we are members telling us to do different things. Here I use the word "community" to mean any loosely-structured, connected or affiliated group of people associated with an individual. This would therefore include one's own family, membership of political or religious groupings, people working in the same office, and, indeed, one's employing organisation. The nature of the concept of community can vary considerably depending on the context in which it applies and can imply a degree of complexity. I intend to use the word in its widest sense to embrace groups of people united in a particular interest or involvement with an individual specific to them and which provide a social framework for a person's moral outlook. Poole (1991) expresses the situation succinctly.

> Morality requires a social identity: only then will the moral subject have reason to do what is morally required . . . We will make sense of what we are doing, even of our own existence, because of its place in a larger community. (Poole, 1991, p51)

Each separate community seeks to influence the behaviour of its members and it is apparent that this is very often a point of tension. Chapter Nine considers the nature of the relationship between employer and employee and the influences identified by informants as their employing organisation and society, together with the role of emotions in the aforementioned relationship. The influences of peer groups of fellow employees and of people in similar

posts within a particular sector of business, together with membership of professional bodies and unions are discussed in Chapter Ten.

In Chapter Eleven I summarise the points which have emerged throughout the thesis, drawing from the informants' experiences in the light of the literature review before pulling together the various conclusions of the project against its aims and objectives. Appendix A provides a summary of each of the project's informants' situations, together with their cognitive map of the decision which they brought to the project.

Chapter Two:

Research Methodology

1. Introduction

In any investigation relating to essentially human processes, a number of choices are available around method and the justification for any particular method. This project seeks to enlighten others about the processes and influences involved in making a moral decision in the workplace. The challenge has been to identify a methodology which would approach the subject area in a holistic way, allow analysis without disturbing the concept of the 'whole' and which would provide detailed data while preserving it within its social and historical context.

This chapter aims to present an argument that supports the social constructionist approach which has been taken in this research project. In doing so, it considers quantitative and qualitative methods, grounded theory and alternative interpretive methodologies before rejecting them in favour of an ontology and epistemology which unite within the social and historical contexts of that being researched. The implications of a relativistic perception of reality are explored. Finally, some testing questions are proposed which would seek to assess the effectiveness of the work in relation to its social constructionist framework.

I define the term "methodology" as being the theoretical justification for the ontology and epistemology of the project's methods and not the methods themselves (Kaplan, 1964). This distinction is made throughout this thesis.

2. The scientific approach and its continuing influence

I intend referring to the scientific/quantitative approach as the belief that empirical reality can be described through scientific formulae capable of *objective* confirmation or denial and derived either from a form of logical argument or from observation within a context where all possible external influences on results have either been withdrawn or nullified in order to recreate an "experiment" within "clinically clean" conditions. It denies the acceptability of any influence on the work by humans. By that, it implies the emotional, feeling, spiritual, thinking aspect of human beings, aspects of humanity which it considers to be non-logical, subjective and therefore detrimental to any scientific, logical investigation. It attempts to describe truth as observed within conditions as close to test tube conditions in a laboratory as possible. Thus, reality is external and objective and knowledge of it is only significant if it is based on observations of the external reality. Further, the observations must be capable of replication in other situations that would test the theory and be capable of generalisation across other identical conditions.

This approach is referred to by writers using a variety of terms – scientific, objective, quantitative, empiricist or positivist – the latter usually in the context of the philosophy of methodology or epistemology within social sciences. Thomas Lindlof writing on qualitative communication studies describes what he calls the "objectivist science" approach as follows.

> Objectivist science depends on literal meanings of events and processes that can be mathematicized in nonlinguistic propositions about which there can be universal agreement. Such propositions are themselves dependent on "meaning realism", or the notion that meanings always have fixed phenomenal referents. In other words, only those events that all inquirers can examine with respect to given meanings, and are therefore publicly available as "facts", merit

> scientific standing – which is why introspection and intuition are not generally valued as scientific tools. (Lindlof, 1995, p23)

Thus, science supports the belief in a "knowable" world, that there is some objective world "out there" which is comprehensible if we could only get to know more about it. It also maintains that research is progressive, that research can build upon itself in reaching for knowledge of the universe and that if we could only progress fast enough and in sufficient different directions, we could finally acquire the optimum knowledge of "life". At the same time, the scientific realist would claim that, in order to understand processes, they need to be broken down into their constituent parts and analysed within the sterile atmosphere of the laboratory. White describes the scientist's beliefs about the way human beings relate to the world: "The individual subject is conceived of as an isolated mind and will; and his vocation is to get clear about the world, to bring it under the control of reason and thus make it available for human projects" (White, 1991, pp2-3).

It is this approach which is taken in many current investigations around business ethics. Examples of this can be seen in an article in the *Journal of Business Ethics* by Scott Vitell and Foo Nin Ho (1997) which sets out to scope the "state of play" of work within the field of business ethics relating to scales measuring the various components of decision making in ethical situations. It tables an analysis of the contents of articles contained in six different journals, listing the varieties of variables measured within the research being reported. These variables include personal characteristics, the organisational environment, ethical climate, deontological norm (set of values), marketing-related norms, desirability of consequences and ethical judgement. Other work in the field has considered the influence of factors such as age (Wimalasari et al, 1996), gender (Smith and Oakley, 1997), and individual personal morality (Logsdon et al, 1994). A range of different sources of samples has been used: business students, managers at different levels of responsibility and working in different fields – computers, marketing, for example. Results have been collated from questionnaires according to established statistical criteria, testing hypotheses and theories.

In the light of this, some models of the decision making process have been offered (Herndon, 1996) as were described within the introduction to this thesis. The object has been to gain new knowledge of the factors that influence moral decision-making in the work environment. The methods being used are well accepted within the field of psychology from which business has, in this instance, borrowed. Single identifiable factors are extracted from within the whole social and historical context in order to analyse their impact in a scientific, "objective" framework.

Robert Chia (1994) describes this research style as relying on a 'strong' ontology of being which privileges thinking in terms of discrete phenomenal 'states', static 'attributes' and sequential 'events'. He recognises that it has concentrated on the "ideally isolated system" (Chia, 1994, p5) with the implication that "things", "events" or social "entities" can be isolated before being put under the microscope. He describes scientists as talking of processes within ideally isolatable events as being a series of actions within the event under study. "It does not refer to the precarious and tentative 'assemblages' of patternings or local orchestration of relationships which generate consequent effects that appear to be observable as discrete and isolatable stages/states" (Chia, 1994, p7). According to Chia, in a quantitative framework, the investigation of process renders it static and abstracted from its context. Given that the aim of my research project is to investigate one particular process, it is difficult to ignore this point. It means that the process must be considered in and as a whole and not broken down to such an extent that it no longer reflects the totality.

The first step is therefore to be clear about the nature of the piece of research and its objectives before deciding on the most appropriate method. Martin Bulmer (1984) argues that the nature of the problem should set the parameters for the conscious choice of method and that very often that choice has not been made but that the option has been for the empirical survey method as described above. Similarly, Alfred Schutz (Wagner, 1970) argues that the nature of the problem dictates the methodological approach. It is therefore important to have made an informed choice relating to the

methodology in order to ensure that it best *fits* the problem, rather than following the mainstream of thought currently prevalent within the field without question.

3. The development of qualitative research

Given that this project is an investigation of the complex processes which relate to humans, then what are the alternatives? We need an approach which enables us to take a holistic perspective to the problem.

The nineteenth century philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey, argued that the empirical/objectivist approach could not be imposed on studies relating to humans because human beings are different from the physical world, being able to reflect, make decisions, have a conscious, mental state, for example. He grouped human studies around psychology, sociology, history and literary review.

> The human studies differ from the sciences because the latter deal with facts which present themselves to consciousness as external and separate phenomena, while the former deal with the living connections of reality experienced in the mind. It follows that the sciences arrive at connections within nature through inferences by means of a combination of hypotheses while the human sciences are based on directly given mental connections. We explain nature but we understand mental life. Inner experience grasps the processes by which we accomplish something as well as the combination of individual functions of mental life into a whole. The experience of the whole context comes first; only later do we distinguish its individual parts. This means that the methods of studying mental life, history and society differ greatly from those used to acquire knowledge of nature. (Rickman, 1976, p89).

Dilthey concluded that we therefore need to take a holistic approach in any investigation of human phenomena using an interdisciplinary approach, including historical and literary analysis.

> Psychology depends on the different approaches compensating for each other's defects. It combines awareness and observation of ourselves, understanding of other people, comparative procedure, experiment and the study of anomalous phenomena. It seeks entry into mental life through many gates (Rickman, 1976, p93).

This strand of philosophy has influenced writers such as Max Weber, Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz as they have developed philosophies and methodologies in the light of theory expounded by Dilthey. Detailed description of this work is available elsewhere (Lindlof, 1995; Wagner, 1970).

A summary follows of various methodologies which have developed out of the above theory and which might be appropriate to this project. Different terminologies are used by writers working within particular paradigms and from those implied theoretical perspectives. The term "paradigm" is used here in a Kuhnian sense, that is, to refer to a tradition of a particular discipline which embraces its history, the development of its theory and its research methods (Kuhn, 1970). For the sake of clarity, I intend to take Thomas Lindlof's analysis as a means of proceeding.

He identifies three strands of qualitative "interpretive" methodology – naturalistic inquiry, ethnography and qualitative research. The naturalist aims to study his or her research subjects as a naturalist/bird-watcher would observe wildlife in a wood. He or she would recognise that the subject needs to be observed in its "natural" surroundings in order to explain certain phenomena. A number of different methods are used to discover a single objective reality. Lindlof identifies a potential problem with this approach as being that of ignoring the impact of the researcher on the researched and the resultant effect (Lindlof, 1995).

Norman Denzin defines naturalistic behaviourism as "the studied commitment to actively enter the worlds of native people and to render those

worlds understandable from the standpoint of a theory that is grounded in the *behaviours, languages, definitions, attitudes and feelings* of those studied" (Denzin, 1979, p38). It attempts a bringing together of the covert, private features of the social act with its public behaviourally observable counterparts. He describes the naturalist as collecting "behaviour specimens".

In seeking to investigate a process relating to how humans reason and subsequently behave, the naturalistic approach might appear, at first glance, to have some attraction. However, it fails to ignore the impact of the researcher on the researched and the process of communication and influencing that occurs as the researcher gains information and knowledge from the informant.

Ethnography has developed from the field of anthropology and implies a full involvement by the researcher in the context of the researched. Thus, the researcher participates in the chosen environment in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the subject of the study and to *describe* the subject of the study. According to Lindlof, ethnographers need to contract with the researched the activities to be studied and areas to be covered (Lindlof, 1995, p20). Thus, the research is subject to negotiation with the researched. This approach has been subjected to criticism on the grounds that there may not be particularly clear criteria as a result as to how the phenomenon being studied is described. Howell describes a number of different ethnographic studies of morality in a wide variety of communities (Howell, 1997). He concludes that there was no converging overview of the nature of morality. At the same time, he recognised that a number of differing moral discourses may be found in any one society which emerge depending on the context.

How might insights gained through an ethnographical approach benefit this project? It might be a potential way of moving forward but the problems of *describing* moral behaviour become particularly challenging when the aim of the project is to consider the *underpinning* reasoning or thought processes or

influences which might be involved in making a moral decision in the workplace.

Lastly, Lindlof describes qualitative researchers as "seeking to preserve the form and content of human behavior and to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations" (Lindlof, 1995, p21). He lists a number of different methods which might come under the heading of qualitative research but maintains that they would all have the same characteristics; a theoretical interest in human processes and with the study of social human action. They all use human investigators as the primary research instruments and all rely primarily on narrative/textual forms for coding data and writing texts relating to the research work. Thus, the justification for taking a qualitative approach to the methodology of this project stems from the nature of the research question when it relates to humans, their thought processes and perspectives. In considering the nature of the process of making a moral decision in the workplace, I seek to argue that the current work of quantitative researchers within the general paradigm of business ethics has failed to reach any form of universal "causal" explanation of the process. A naturalist approach to the problem would not provide any other enlightenment than to describe what is seen. An ethnographic perspective on the process would, again, provide a description of the multitudinous influences which might enhance understanding without the means of exploring them in greater depth. In conclusion, therefore, a form of qualitative approach to the problem of what happens when someone is faced with a moral dilemma at work would seek to recognise that this is a research question relating to human processes, involving interaction with others within a social context which the researcher influences by his or her very questioning but which provides a method of enlightening others and discovering new perspectives on the subject. However, being a form of antithesis to the modernist approach, the method would seek to maintain the arena of inquiry within its social and historical context and to examine it within that framework.

The qualitative research paradigm is a stable for many different methodologies, all of which might have an element within them which could be deemed to provide an appropriate approach to this inquiry. The one most obviously appealing alternative methodology relates to the means of research provided by grounded theory. This is outlined and rejected before moving on to a presentation of the argument for adopting a social constructionist perspective.

4. Deduction, induction and grounded theory

It is one of the characteristics of the scientific approach to research methods that the aim is to test hypotheses either to prove them or disprove them. In other words, a theory of possible explanation of a phenomenon is conceptualised before the start of a particular project with the aim of either proving it or disproving it. This would follow the logical process of deduction, moving from a general position to a particular theory as a result of discovered "facts".

Glaser and Strauss in their work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: strategies for qualitative research* proposed using an inductive approach – starting with a group of particular facts and extrapolating a general theory from those facts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). They described theory as by necessity "fitting" the situation being researched and "working" when put into use. They define "fit" as being that "the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study" and define "work" as "they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behaviour under study". They therefore suggest that theory should be generated from an examination of the data. They argue that grounding theory in the data means that the researcher can be more faithful to the data than by trying to fit the data to either prove or disprove a preconceived theory. They consider the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research methods and acknowledge the strengths of each. "We believe that each form of data is useful for both verification and generation of theory, whatever the primacy of emphasis. . . In many instances, both forms of data are necessary

– not quantitative used to test qualitative, but both used as supplements, as mutual verification and, most important for us, as different forms of data on the same subject, which, when compared, will each generate theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p18).

One of their justifications for the grounded theory/inductive approach to the generation of theory is that the deductive method tends to limit the researcher to the testing of the proposed hypothesis. It thereby restricts and constrains the researcher and limits the possibilities of discovery such as that of a different theory that would fit the situation better. On the other hand, the inductive approach of grounding theory in the data means that the researcher can take a "clean", almost naïve view of the data available and induce theory that fits the data and works in resulting testing of the theory.

The "purist" form of grounded theory would therefore insist that the researcher start with a *tabula rasa*, in other words, an attitude that presumes nothing and that attempts to forget, or, at least, puts aside any prior relevant knowledge. This approach instantly raises the question of whether this is in fact possible or practicable. Glaser and Strauss appear to be advocating the *suspension* of prior knowledge by the researcher when working on base data. "An effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas. Similarities and convergences with the literature can be established after the analytic core of categories has emerged." (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p37). Thus, as patterns emerge within the initial stages of data analysis, there would appear to be little problem within grounded theory with beginning to compare what is emerging with previously researched hypotheses which have perhaps touched on some element of the subject under study. It is a constant "flip-flop" between data and conceptualisation (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1993).

The history of the dispute between Glaser and Strauss which later developed over grounded theory is not relevant for this thesis except to state in the

broadest terms that it relates to the nature of the process in analysing data and that which is achieved by it. Strauss would argue that theory is generated through a rigorous analytical process of data while Glaser holds that such disciplined processes *force* theory and that these therefore distort the data; grounded theory should be aiming to develop hypotheses for testing by other methods. In reading the two approaches (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, and Glaser, 1992), the argument appears to reflect two different points on a scale between quantitative and qualitative methods, Glaser taking a less structured approach than Strauss.

The purpose for including grounded theory within this writing is because I originally hoped to adopt its approach. The reasons for this were that it appeared to suit my project in terms of being able to take a more "holistic" approach to the subject, that I wanted to get away from testing hypotheses (the mainstream of business ethics research) and felt that an inductive approach was appropriate. A number of factors have come together to change my direction. Firstly, I started the project with a literature review and, although every attempt was made to "suspend" knowledge of possible influences on the moral decision-making process, nevertheless the knowledge derived from existing writing was present. Secondly, grounded theory involves the decontextualising of text and coding of data to the extent that I would have difficulty in relating the detail to the whole process, apart from my rejection of detailed textual analysis. Thirdly, the influence of social constructionism has alerted me to my own influences on the research process and that these need to be accounted for.

However, the notion of induction, of starting with as much of a *tabula rasa* as possible in the circumstances and opening the process under study up to see what emerges remained with me and it was my intention that the research methods used should reflect this. In seeking for "new" knowledge the grounded theory approach enables both induction and abduction (Rennie, 1998).

5. Social constructionism

Social constructionism appears to offer a form of resolution to questions relating to an approach which enables the process of making a moral decision to be examined in a holistic way, embedding it within its social environment, recognising the nature of the interaction between researcher and researched and providing an ontology and epistemology which unite within a shared historical context.

(a) The roots of social constructionism

The roots of social constructionism are identified as being within the work of George Kelly in *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* published in 1955 (Sarbin and Kitsuse, 1994; Rychlak, 1992). In summary, Kelly sees humans as perceiving the world through a series of what he calls "transparent patterns or templets" (Kelly, 1955, p7). He refers to these patterns as *constructs* because they are a way of *construing* the world. In general, an individual will continually modify these constructs in the light of experience.

Kelly maintains that an individual develops discrete constructs in order to predict and, therefore, control future events. Thus, a construct is tested against its ability to predict events. Each construct consists of a concept, together with its opposite. Thus, black and white are one construct. The minimum context for a construct is three objects, the third being a duplicate of or likeness of the first (i.e. black). Similarly, there has to be a minimum of two relationships involved, that of likeness and that of difference. The emphasis in Kelly's writing is that constructs are continually modified as a result of experience and are a means of "making sense" of an individual's "world".

In 1966, Berger and Luckmann published *The Social Construction of Reality*. They identified the key terms in their treatise as being "reality" and "knowledge". They defined "reality" as being a "quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition" and "knowledge" as "the certainty that phenomena are real and that

they possess specific characteristics" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p13) maintaining that "the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality" (p15).

Berger and Luckmann considered the social interaction between two people and the nature of that shared reality. They recognized what they call the "typifications" that people make when talking to another. By this, they refer to the types of "labels" that we place on others as we get to know them and the process of testing out and adjustment of the labelling process as the interaction progresses (cf Kelly). Following on from this, they point to the "objectifying" process which happens in the reality of everyday life in that we acknowledge an objectivity of certain aspects of reality in relation to the existence of objects.

They recognized that humanity is an inherently social being, influenced from an early stage of development as individuals by a social environment which provides a stability and direction. Where does this come from? Their answer is that "social order is a human product, or, more precisely, an ongoing human production" (p69). In considering the nature of organisations, institutions are depicted as achieving an objectivity which is created by humans and which is a socially constructed reality. The influence of Berger and Luckmann's work spread wider than the sociological paradigm within which it was written and, as with Kelly's work, it is acknowledged as seminal to the development of social constructionism (Sarbin and Kitsuse, 1994).

At this point it is useful to consider the terminology around social constructionism. The literature is divided between constructionism (for example McNamee and Gergen, 1992) and "constructivism" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). Hoffman sees a clear distinction which she presents as follows:

> According to this (constructivist) view, percepts and constructs take shape as the organism bumps against its environment. By contrast, the social construction theorists see ideas, concepts and memories

> arising from social interchange and mediated through language. (Hoffman, 1992, p8)

She identifies a common theme in that both challenge the modernist view that the world and its reality can be known with objective certainty. This definition appears to rely on the question of how active a role an individual takes in interacting with his or her environment in the ways that personal constructs are modified by such tensions. The constructivist would appear to take a more passive view of the individual than that of the social constructionist, although not in all literature (for example, Schwandt) and one therefore has to come down on the side of Sarbin and Kitsuse in acknowledging that in many cases the distinction is unclear and inconsistent. I therefore propose to use the phrase "social constructionism" throughout.

(b) Social constructionism – a paradigm of beliefs

Following on from Kelly and Berger and Luckmann, a collection of research work and writing has developed around the term "social constructionism". I seek here to summarise its perspective. Denzin and Lincoln refer to the individual's perceptions of the world in terms of constructions which are subjective and gained through experiences.

> Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp 110-111)

Similarly, Schwandt on constructivism:

> Constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience and, further, we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. (Schwandt, 1994, pp125-126)

McNamee and Gergen define what is meant by social constructionism in terms of the grounding of our experiences within a social and historical context. Coming from a psychological tradition, they see constructionism as challenging the subject/object relationship along with the traditional view of the therapist/scientist (McNamee and Gergen, 1992).

Thus, social constructionism challenges the scientific, positivist view of objective reality. In doing so, it is seen as placing itself alongside the thinking of Foucault and Derrida (Hoffman, 1992). Hoffman seeks to expand this by identifying five different ways in which social constructionism looks to challenge quantitative psychology. The first is that it is possible to carry out objective social research. The second area relates to the nature of the "self" with the placing of the concept of the self within a social setting, relating to the concepts of others and the history of experiences that one individual accrues. Thirdly, social constructionism, according to Hoffman, rejects developmental psychological theories, arguing that development cannot happen through scheduled progress but is haphazard and unsystematic. Fourthly, emotions as a separate state *within* people are rejected by social constructionists who see them as a part of a wider communications process. The last area to be rejected is the concept of different 'levels' within any one particular theory and she gives several examples of different layers of concepts within, for example, communication theory. Social constructionists would deny such orderliness.

The following offers a useful summary of the social constructionist position:

> Social constructionism, rather than assuming that reality has an as yet undiscovered order, recognizes that, as a matter of present, contingent fact, none of the social or mental forms of which we currently speak has an objective nature. In reality, they are all partial, provisional, and intersubjective (Shotter, 1992, p202).

It is apparent that, in the scale of things, social constructionism might be seen as overlapping with the deconstructionism of discursive constructions by writers such as Derrida and Saussure. Hearn offers a useful distinction:

> Whereas social constructionism takes a phenomenon . . . and seeks to explore the social forces that construct or account for that phenomenon and the forms it takes, deconstructionism attends to the social, and particularly discursive, elements that account for that phenomenon in the first place. (Hearn, 1993, p142)

Thus social constructionism places itself against objectivist approaches and theories and sits very closely next to deconstructionist theories.

6. Criticisms of social constructionism

While it might appear, at first sight, that social constructionism "fits" this project, it is necessary to face the criticisms that have been made of it before adopting it finally.

Four criticisms of the "constructivist" approach come from Schwandt.

1. The problem of criteria for judging research work. By its very nature, constructionists are unwilling to acknowledge that there is some independent base foundation against which results might be judged. Several attempts are made to overcome this – an appeal to the quality of the method through procedural criteria is one. Another possible solution relates to what Schwandt calls a "subtle realism" (Schwandt, 1994, p130) which appeals to some type of intuition *beyond* the conclusions (or constructions) of the research. The last suggestion is to forego concerns about the differentiation between mind and world and focus on "intentional, meaningful behaviour that is by definition historically, socially and culturally relative" (p130). This leads to judgement on constructive accounts which are attempting to make clear that

which was previously unclear and which is based on whether they are "useful, fitting, generative of further inquiry, and so forth" (p130).

2. The lack of a base from which to criticise the interpretation or construction (the "critical purchase" according to Schwandt). He traces this back to the view of the inquirer as objective and disinterested. Thus critics argue that it is not possible for inquirers to become totally cognisant of any situation while they remain apart from it.

3. One set of criticisms derives from postmodern ethnography and sees the inquirer in the constructionist framework as having unjustifiable authority over the informant.

4. Another criticism relates to the nature of the epistemology. If one asserts that knowledge is individual to the knower and that it is impossible to draw a distinction between the knower and the known, this is a *psychological* theory. However, if one also claims to be saying on an *epistemological* front that there is no independent foundation of knowledge, then how does one explain the transmission of so-called knowledge? Schwandt has no resolution to this tension. However, this can be explained by examining the concept of *shared* constructs between knower and learner, between informant and researcher. Each comes to an encounter with a particular set of constructs which are modified as a result of the experience of the encounter through a sense-making process and acknowledgement of each other's realities.

Parrott identifies what he calls the central fallacy of constructionism which is that even though it maintains that there is no absolute knowledge or certainty, it argues this with great spirit. "If social constructionism is correct about the uncertainty of the world, to be consistent it would have to be uncertain about its own validity" (Parrott, 1992, p217). However, Parrott fails to make the distinction between social constructionism arguing its own case and applied constructionism where we have seen from the practical projects above, very

little is concluded in any definite form but much is illuminated. Validity becomes subsumed within a relativistic epistemology where the knower and the learner's perspectives are different but shared and thereby enlightened.

A final criticism of the constructionist approach can be summed up in the question "How do you get anything new in terms of ideas or theory if all knowledge is dependent on social interaction?" My response to that is that by sharing perspectives between knower and learner a new perspective is created which is the shared perspective. Consider a young child whose experience of her surroundings is that the world in which she lives in is, essentially, flat. It may only be when she comes to see a sphere of the global world and photographs of earth from space that she learns that the world is round. She learns a new construct about her surroundings, or modifies an existing one. It might be possible that the child next door to her has always conceptualised the world as round and never seen it as potentially flat. That child, too, learns a new construct in the concept of the flat earth. The different perspectives introduce new experiences and new learning for those involved. A second defence to this challenge in asking the question "How do you get anything new?" would be to question the assumption is that there is something "new" to get. In terms of social sciences, is that an appropriate assumption?

The social constructionist alleges that reality is rooted within its social and historical context and that there is no absolute reality. He or she denies that any enlightenment gained from research can be generalised into a "universal truth". As with many other paradigms, there is a broad width of beliefs and theories which all fall within the label "social constructionist". Thus, Liebrucks is able to assert that social constructionists do not subscribe to a relativist epistemology and refers to a "moderate" cultural relativism (Liebrucks, 2001, p387) which is dependent on a high degree of abstraction from more specific accounts at a more local level.

This point of view would appear to lead to problems in terms of defining the scale of any particular project. What would constitute a "very high level of

abstraction?" It is doubtful that this project would qualify against that test which leaves it with a relativist epistemology and ontology.

Since it is also maintained that there is no "universal truth", the social constructionist position remains tenable because it is not possible to be other than relativist in perspective. Scheurich (1997) describes the argument in relation to relativism as "binary" and maintains that, if one side of the debate is removed (in this case, the belief in the possibility of universally held principles or truths), the other side of the debate stands on its own and defends itself.

7. The project ontology and epistemology

Denzin and Lincoln describe the qualitative researcher as being a philosopher who is guided by principles (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). They refer to this network of beliefs around the researcher as an interpretive framework which can be defined by the responses of the inquirer to three questions. These questions are in a particular order that determines their consequent responses. They relate to (a) the ontological question of the nature of reality (What is the nature of reality?) (b) the epistemological question of the relationship of the inquirer to such reality (How do we know that reality?) and (c) the methodological question of how such sought knowledge can be gained (Given the nature of the research question, how can we achieve knowledge of that reality?)

As indicated above, within the social constructionist framework that I intend to adopt, the ontology and the epistemology merge into one. (Scheurich (1997) in fact argues that the epistemology precedes the ontology). They are relativist in nature; reality and knowledge merge into their particular social, cultural and historical context (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). There is no independent universal reality, only the reality that we perceive as individuals living as members of a variety of communities. This reality can be shared with others but it is not a condition of being a reality that it be so shared. However, once shared and understood, it gains an additional strength of its

own. That understanding comes from the sense-making of others, sharing common concepts or constructs. An example of this might be someone suffering from depression who will often say "only people who have been there themselves know what I am going through and what it is like". Someone who has never been so ill cannot therefore share that reality but, through the experience of talking to a number of depressives, might come to acknowledge that it exists. However, two people with experience of depression can share their various experiences and find common elements within, thus giving the nature of their experienced reality an additional strength through its commonalty. Indeed, much personal support for sufferers is gained through such a process deriving strength from the sharing of individually perceived realities.

The epistemology of a constructionist is dependent on the nature of the transaction between researcher and informant. "The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the "findings" are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p111). The concepts of ontology and epistemology merge within one investigative process. The reality found within a particular social and historical context is also communicated within that context between informer and informed.

Thus constructionist methodology, according to Denzin and Lincoln, is "hermeneutical and dialectical" (p111). The nature of social construction dictates that through the interaction between informer and informed shared constructs are used in order to build up a mutual construction which contributes to an additional awareness of the problem which did not exist before that encounter within the informed. Similarly, the task of the researcher is to learn from informants with a view to modifying her own construction of the research problem to such an extent that readers coming new to the project would, in turn, learn from it and refresh their own understanding as a result.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the nature of the dominating modernistic approach to research within the field of business ethics and discussed the relative strengths of an alternative paradigm to be found within the "stable" of interpretive methodology. Having examined grounded theory as a potential alternative qualitative methodology which might have suited the nature of the research question, I have argued that the social constructionist paradigm fits the research question, grounding it within its societal and historical context.

In conclusion, the methodology for this project sets the parameters by which it can be tested. Its social constructionist approach lays down certain principles which inherently question not the validity of the research but, rather, its honesty in relation to the reality of the informants and its consequent ability to "make sense" to the reader and to inform the reader. In examining the constructionist perspective on judging the quality of a piece of research, Denzin and Lincoln refer to the "authenticity criteria of fairness, ontological authenticity (enlarges personal construction), educative authenticity (leads to improved understanding of constructions of others) catalytic authenticity (stimulates to action), and tactical authenticity (empowers action)" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p114). The following are the questions which need to be used to test this piece of research as a result of adopting a social constructionist philosophy:

Does it "make sense" to the reader in that the results correspond to expectations deriving from current personal constructs around the subject?
Does it inform the reader, improving his or her understanding of the constructions of others?
Will it "make a difference"? For example, might it stimulate or empower action for change as a result?

Certainly, in terms of providing some form of new information in addition to existing constructs, it is suggested that working with research informants in

this way has highlighted elements of making a moral decision in the workplace that we might have expected to see. Examples of this would be the exposure of the nature of the balance between individual and organisational values, the acceptance of emotions within a particular context and the difference between genders in the approach to moral problems.

At the same time, it informs the reader in terms of the comparison between practice and philosophical theory and, by illuminating the thought processes of others through the use of cognitive maps, one gains a deeper insight into the types of factors in play in such situations. Lastly, a strong message comes from this work in terms of the nature of the tensions which can exist between organisation and individual which can be to the detriment of either if both are not in harmony.

Chapter Three:

Mapping the moral decision: a social constructionist research project

1. The nature of a social constructionist research project

This chapter aims to demonstrate how the social constructionist approach has influenced the choice of research method in working with informants and sharing information about their experiences through the collection of their individual narratives and the use of cognitive maps. It outlines potential issues in gathering information and presents an argument for the rejection of detailed textual analysis of data. The supporting theory for working with narratives and cognitive maps is detailed before the chapter concludes with a proposed set of criteria by which to judge this project.

Having identified the central themes within social constructionism, one is faced with the question of how this works in practice in terms of empirical research. How does the social constructionist approach a research question? How is the work carried out in practice?

Sarbin and Kitsuse (1994) identify a common theme running through constructionist work in the use of the narrative. Much of the work involves a story relating to the subject under study. They describe the use of narrative as having the objective to tell a story about a phenomenon within its natural context.

> Narratives are, of course, shaped by and reflect the perspectives of the narrators who produce them, and constructionism explicitly acknowledges and sanctions the differential perspectives in the observation and interpretation of social phenomena. The logic of constructionism fosters the introduction of multiple perspectives to counter the positivist presupposition of a uniform and objective social reality. (Sarbin and Kitsuse, 1994, p8)

Sarbin and Kitsuse recognise that, in drawing upon narratives, such analysts may go beyond a "dispassionate academic discourse" (Sarbin and Kitsuse, 1994, p9) in using a rhetoric which reflects a moral imperative concerning the content of their study. Their own moral values are reflected in the judgements they make around the contexts explored. Thus, the contributions in their book reflect concerns around institutional and social inequities.

In considering some practical applications of social constructionism, I describe two different projects, both contained within Sarbin and Kitsuse's *Constructing the Social*. The first relates to R S Hallam's project on "Anxiety". He denies that the purpose of his study is to produce a "new" theory of anxiety and recognises that he is therefore at great variance to the aims of scientific psychology. He chooses to take theoretical statements relating to anxiety as cultural texts in the first instance and only on a secondary basis of relating to "processes and entities whose validity transcends a correspondence with lay discourse and everyday reality" (Hallam, 1994, p141). His purposes in writing on anxiety are twofold – firstly, to enable new empirical questions to be raised through conceptual analysis and, secondly, to influence lay discourse around the concept of anxiety.

He summarises the literature relating to anxiety and addresses contemporary models of anxiety inferring the lay person's concept of anxiety from an intuitive perspective. He moves on to challenge the externalisation of causality of anxiety as perceived from a positivist psychological approach and concludes that the very existence of the scientific concept needs to be challenged in order that people might be enabled to question the nature of the concept as an involuntary natural emotion. Here, then, Hallam relies on the work of others for his evidence of the nature of the construct of "anxiety" within the field of psychology and his own experience of the "lay person's" construction and uses his own values in seeking to judge the academic perspectives before using them to challenge the essence of the lay perspective. Applying Denzin and Lincoln's test of social constructionist

projects, it is clear that Hallam, firstly, proposes a model construct of anxiety which makes sense to the reader and which successfully modifies one's existing concept of what anxiety is. In seeking to challenge the lay perception of anxiety, he seeks to "make a difference".

The second empirical project I wish to consider is that offered by C L Bodily on "Ageism and the Deployments of 'Age'". He takes the written comments from a questionnaire relating to returning to nursing as a career and analyses them in terms of their reference to the concept of "age" within that context. Along with other social constructionists, it is the process of analysis which is the enlightenment rather than any specific conclusions. Following the common theme of narratives within constructionist projects, Bodily describes their use as follows:

> At the very least, a constructionist view prepares us to construct, listen to, and value very different kinds of stories about ourselves and our world – stories perhaps less conclusive, more playful, and imaginative than is customary, but nonetheless potentially illuminating and important. (Bodily, 1994, p175)

The common element amongst all contributors to this volume is that they all attempt to analyse a social concept within its own societal and historical context and seek to shed additional light on the concept through such analysis. The data used can include textual history, interviews and case studies.

2. The project's research method

In seeking to design a social constructionist piece of work which complied with the methods demonstrated by writers such as Hallam and Bodily, a number of practical decisions needed to be made around working with informants in order to elicit the best results from the researcher's contacts with informants. In doing this, I was mindful, too, of the nature of the data which would emerge and the processes which would be employed for its

analysis. Thus, the question of whether to work with informants as individuals or in focus groups, the sampling strategy, the use of "dilemmas" and the nature of any resulting textual analysis needed to be addressed.

(a) Research informants as individuals or in groups?

The first question to consider was whether to access research informants as individuals on a one-to-one basis or whether to work in groups. My study of theories relating to group processes (see Chapter Ten) very strongly indicates the different forces within groups and the likelihood that the overall end outcome might relate to a "group" output rather than the sum of the individual members' output. This would be unhelpful to the study of individual moral thought processes. The conclusion was that the researcher needed to work with individuals.

(b) The nature of the sample

The most interesting moral decisions in the workplace tend to be taken by managers because it is their responsibility for managing other people which leads to moral decisions which can be particularly challenging or difficult. It therefore seemed to be sensible to be looking for a sample of managers, preferably from a cross-section of type of organisation or industry.

(c) The size of the sample

The seminal writing on the qualitative researcher's approach to sampling (Kuzel 1992, Miles and Huberman 1994) is to be found within Michael Patton's book *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (1990). In it he makes the distinction between probability sampling and purposeful sampling.

> The logic and power of probability sampling depends on selecting a truly random and statistically representative sample that will permit confident generalization from the sample to a larger population. The purpose is generalization.

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. (Patton, 1990, p169).

Patton defines "information-rich cases" as being those from which it is possible to gain much knowledge about issues which are central to the whole *purpose* of the research. Amongst the purposeful sampling strategies that he identifies are typical case sampling, theory based sampling and a search for what he refers to as "negative" cases which would tend to disprove emerging theory and he recognises that a mix of strategies are required.

The notion of *saturation* or *redundancy*, linked to a qualitative approach to research is often associated with the question of sampling strategy, most frequently within the context of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe it as being a type of inductive process of gathering data to the point where no new information is available and existing information has been confirmed to a greater extent. Patton expresses reservations about the use of saturation in research projects (Patton, 2000a and 2000b) in terms of difficulties of deciding when it has been reached, planning for it and convincing others that a position of "saturation" has been attained.

Kuzel and Miles and Huberman both reproduce Patton's typology of sampling strategy in qualitative research and both identify common features which include the smallness of the size of the sample. This raises the question "if the sample is small, what implications does this have for generalisability?" Patton and Kuzel are both clear that any potential theory that emerges from the sample relates only to *that sample* and cannot be generalised within a wider context. Miles and Huberman express it thus:

> We are generalizing from one case to the next on the basis of a match to the underlying theory, not to a larger universe. The choice of cases usually is made on *conceptual* grounds, not on representative grounds. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p29)

This leaves the difficult question of how big the sample should be in practice. Patton maintains that the quality in terms of availability of information within the work with a small number of informants, together with the ability of the researcher to observe and analyse the information, is more important than the size of the sample.

Kuzel suggests that "6-8 data sources are often sufficient for a homogenous sample while 12-20 commonly are needed when looking for disconfirming evidence or trying to achieve maximum variation" (p41). Miles and Huberman, too, confirm that the question of size is not answerable on statistical grounds and ask the following question: "How many cases, in what kind of sampling frame, would give us confidence in our analytic generalizations?" (p30). Here, following Patton, they refer to the degree of richness of data in determining the size of sample and indicate that more than 15 complex situations becomes unwieldy. "There are too many data to scan visually and too many permutations to account for" (p30).

In summary, it is possible to extract a checklist against which to judge a piece of qualitative research in relation to the size of the sample of informants involved in the project whilst recognising that there is no "ideal".

1. The need to be able to relate sampling to a particular strategy and justify it.
2. The requirement that the work with informants provides "information-rich" data.
3. The researcher's ability to observe and analyse information given by informants in all its depth.
4. The recognition of the need to be extremely careful in relation to generalising shared concepts from a small number of informants. The shared behaviour or constructs relate to that group of people and cannot be claimed to be generalisable in any statistical sense into wider universalisable theory.

Finally, a piece of research by Swan and Newell (1998) involving cognitive mapping worked with 16 informants, of which data from eight were used. They justify the size of the sample by describing it as a "small sample but not unusual for this kind of cognitive mapping research which focuses on individuals or on small groups" (Swan and Newell, 1998, p118).

(d) Hypothetical v historical dilemmas

Much work has been done in the past relating to individual analysis of hypothetical moral dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1976, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1994). The *main criticism* of such dilemmas is that individuals tend not to identify with them personally but take an objective and impersonal view of them. This means that the decision that they come to might not relate to how they would actually behave in reality. Chapter Six of this thesis outlines the criticism of Kohlberg's use of the Heinz dilemma which was that, for most of his research informants, the fact that it was set in Europe meant that it was far removed from where they lived – United States, Mexico, Israel. Much more challenging is for individuals to have to talk about a decision which they have *already* made and for them to think about the influences on the decision and their reasons for taking it. This also avoids any problems of difference between moral intention and moral action because, historically, the intention has become the action.

The problem then arises that one would be comparing data of totally different contexts. The challenge would be to spot the patterns within the raw data, to begin to analyse through a coding process the common elements.

(e) A rejection of detailed textual analysis

In surveying pieces of research which have used qualitative methods rather than quantitative, it becomes apparent that the analysis of "text", whether it be written or transcription of interviews often forms the basis for the emergence of "patterns" or codes which lead on to theory. Indeed, there are a number of software packages available, for example, NUD*ST, which offer a

tool to enable such analysis to be carried out more efficiently. The use of narratives and cognitive maps inevitably generates forms of text which might lend themselves to a form of analysis which takes patterns of words and phrases identified by the researcher and feeds them into a process which strips them of their context, leading the project into potentially new paths of discovery. However, I wish to challenge the validity of that process and reject its use for researching moral decisions in the workplace. In doing this, it is recognised that the interpretation of the word "text" has been widened in recent years to describe all life's experiences as "text". However, in this thesis, I intend to restrict my meaning to words which are spoken or written.

I seek to reject textual analysis by an appeal to areas of theory around non-verbal communications and the way we communicate through language. While we seek to communicate through language, there are many forms of communication which do not depend on language. These include signs, signals, symbols, dance, music, the non-verbal expression of emotions and facial expressions. Much work has been done within the academic sphere on the nature of nonverbal communication and its implied recognition as a phenomenon which is of value to investigate (Key, 1980; Heslin and Patterson, 1982; Weitz, 1974; Knapp, 1978). As a result, it is proposed that nonverbal communication conveys as much, if not more, of the "message" between informant and informed with a resultant distortion of the project if too much emphasis is placed on the meaning of verbal communications.

In communication theory can be found research on the relationship between words and their meaning and how this meaning is conveyed or communicated (Griffin, 1994). Communication is defined as being "the management of messages for the purpose of creating meaning" (Griffin, 1994, p19). The fact that words have multiple meanings within different contexts means that there is always a possibility for misinterpretation. Language becomes a reflection of part of an individual's reality. The nature of the reflected reality will change depending on the context in which it is being spoken or written or heard or read.

These two strands of theory both point to language, whether written or spoken, being one part of the total message which is communication. To take an example, I might be quoted as saying "I am having a day off work today". How I say this, the intonations in my voice and the expressions on my face will inform the listener about my feelings about this statement. I might be pleased because I have got some special plans for the day or I might be looking sad because I will be attending the funeral of a close relative. The words are only a part of what I am expressing. Every informant with whom I have worked has told their story and explored their cognitive map using words, body language and facial expressions to convey how they felt about the situation they were describing. An overemphasis on the words would bring the project into danger of distorting the informants' messages and, consequently, the conclusions which we might draw from them. In carrying out a conceptual analysis, I have tried to recall the totality of the informants' communication processes without the benefit of video but with the use of tape recording. The study of non-verbal communication and work around communication theory and "the meaning of meaning" provide the justification for my reluctance to carry out detailed textual analysis. Communication lies in a "sharing" of information leading to a common understanding between researcher and informant.

In summary, in seeking to work with informants to enlighten others, I concluded that informants would contribute most working on an individual basis talking about actual historical situations in which they had found themselves making difficult moral choices. I also needed a research method which would not lead on to a detailed textual analysis of the resultant data but which would, rather, allow *patterns* to emerge from the data which would inform the reader. Such patterns would relate to a commonality of thought process or behaviour or nature of influence. This would lead to a *conceptual* analysis of the content of the data around the constructs of the informants. The procedure of collecting cognitive maps of informants around a given moment in time became immediately attractive, together with the collection of narratives which added detail to the maps.

3. Research Method: Narrative Theory

In seeking a method of working with individual informants, I was certain that individuals would have put together a type of story in their own minds as a result of responding to my request for them to talk about a historical decision which they had made. I knew instinctively that they would have spent some time collating the various elements around the situation that we were to explore together and that they would be wanting to "tell their story" before we could look at mapping the content of the decision. I therefore structured the interview to begin with their account of the situation which they were offering to discuss. This was taped and, in most cases, the flow of the story was uninterrupted by me. The result was the collection of 16 narratives which were of potential value as a source of information around the process in themselves. The question of how to draw out common elements therefore arose and, for a solution, I turned to the theory of narratives and their analysis. I have already identified that the use of narratives is a common element amongst social constructionist research projects.

Narratives have previously been used in researching individual moral development. Kohlberg used the "dilemmas" while Gilligan focussed on women's feelings around pregnancy and abortion (Attanucci, 1991). Similarly, MacIntyre (1985) related moral philosophy to its social and historical context by referring to the narratives which both exist as fictions promoting values and to individual life narratives which also embrace virtues. In the former, he refers to the virtues expressed in the Iliad and within Jane Austen's writing while also recognising the need for individuals to relate to a life narrative of their own which makes sense and which includes virtues which enable that individual to evaluate their own life (cf Fisher, 1984). This was therefore not a new approach in considering the nature of moral decision-making.

Gergen and Gergen draw attention to the dominance of narratives within Western culture as a means of explaining our experiences, our lives and our own perspectives about self, making the point that they do not relate to the

individual outside of his or her social context but, rather, are "products of social interchange" (Gergen and Gergen, 1988, p18). They identify three forms of narrative – the stability narrative, the progressive and the regressive narrative. The stability narrative reflects a position of no change in relation to the individual's situation at the end of the story. The progressive and the regressive narratives reflect either positive or negative perceived benefits for the individual as a result.

In using narrative to *make sense* of social interactions, they maintain that the narrative reflects one perspective on a series of events. However, individuals have the ability to choose the perspective which they place on the narrative. As well, there is a large temporal range for the context of the narrative ranging from a universal setting to what happened within the last hour. They conclude that an individual within today's society would be looking for a stable narrative but with an ability to change in a positive way.

The type of reality that narratives portray is interpretive through being an indication of the informant's interpretation of events from their own individual perspective. An informant will often not respond directly to a closed question but, instead, tell a story that is intended to convey a chosen reply. Frequently, too, an individual uses the telling of a story to "make sense" of a series of events with particular emphasis on the self's role within it, in order to portray the individual's role in a positive light (Riessman, 1995; Shankar and Goulding, 2000).

A narrative, in summary, can be defined as a discrete story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Various writers have sought to develop an identifiable common structure within narratives (Gergen and Gergen, 1988; Czarniawska, 1998; Labov, 1972). The narrowest view of such frameworks is found in Czarniawska who defines narratives as having at least three elements "an original state of affairs, an action or an event, and the consequent state of affairs" (Czarniawska, 1998, p2). They also need what she calls a "plot", something which brings the events together, links them through, for example,

a temporal or causal relationship. Gergen and Gergen identify five factors within the structure of a narrative.

1. The establishment of a valued "end point". There has to be some "point" to the story, some purpose for telling it which is acceptable to the teller and the listener.
2. Selection of events relevant to the above end point (goal state). The establishment of the point of the story then governs the choice of events which are included within the narrative.
3. The order of events. Such events are then placed within an order, usually temporal, in which they are recounted.
4. Establishing causal linkages. In many narratives, the events are linked also by some causal link. However, the construct of this link may be particularly wide.
5. Demarcation signs. These are signs which normally mark the beginning and end of the story and would include phrases such as "once upon a time" and appropriate endings such as "now you know".

Labov summarises the process of a narrative as follows:

> A complete narrative begins with an orientation, proceeds to the complicating action, is suspended at the focus of evaluation before the resolution, concludes with the resolution, and returns the listener to the present time with the coda. (Labov, 1972, p369)

Having said this, Labov acknowledges that the structure of the evaluation section spills over into the rest of the narrative and can be found elsewhere in various forms. It is Labov's identification of the evaluation element which is of particular interest to this project because it is within that context that value statements are made indicating, for example, virtues supported or moral principles being upheld. Thus, the purpose of the evaluation is to explain why the story is being told and the *point* of the story.

Labov's work does not reflect upon the significance of evaluation within a narrative which relates to a moral decision. However, it is clear that, in telling the story around such a decision, the narrator's evaluation of that process is going to be crucial to our understanding of it. Again, because of the very context of the story, it is likely that it will reflect upon the wrongs and rights of the situation and express principles which are being applied by the narrator in that setting.

Telling a story can often involve a mixture of emotions and there is often much social pressure to ensure that a positive "spin" is placed on the evaluative outcome of the narrative. It is not necessarily socially acceptable to reflect negative emotions within such a context (Gergen and Gergen, 1988). However, such negative emotions expressed within a narrative can help to illuminate a social construct such as loneliness according to Wood.

> An advantage of the narrative approach for viewing emotion, and particularly loneliness, is that it can incorporate and integrate all of the elements that may be involved, including any physiological aspects, whether these are viewed metaphorically or not. The complexity of the social construction of loneliness can be captured within the narrative not only because the story can incorporate a label for the emotion, but also because it has content. (Wood, 1986, p202)

C K Riessman (1993) offers a useful framework for working with narratives in terms of a process of the five stages of attending, telling, transcribing, analysing and reading.

Attending is the process of being part of a series of actions and imposing personal significance upon the events, depending on the perspective.
Telling depends on language which inevitably brings about a gap between the experience and the communication of it to others. Riessman here sees the telling as a joint process between teller and listener.

Transcribing recognises that transcribing is part of an interpretive process in itself, for example, decisions of how much to impose "sense", grammatical correctness, insertion of "ers" and "ums" and silences

Analyzing "The stop-and-start style of oral stories of personal experience gets pasted together into something different" (Riessman, 1993, p14).

Reading recognises the potential variety of readers' interpretation of the resultant text.

In conclusion, Bush et al recognise the limitations of previous work such as Ferrell and Gresham and Reidenbach and Robin who attempted to map out the process of making a moral decision and to evaluate the quality of that decision (Bush et al, 1997; Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Reidenbach and Robin, 1991). They all failed in this through the inability of any system to embrace the individual nature of the historical and societal context of any "ethical situation". They identify the narrative paradigm as a way of overcoming this through the comparison, for example in the service industry of the narrative of the service provider and that of the customer. If the customer is saying that it is wrong to give a "live" concert with dubbed voices then the narrative of the corresponding service provider which puts on such concerts needs to be compatible.

However, with a word of caution, K Grayson challenges narrative theory under what she calls "construct definition". She refers to the problem that everyone has a different concept of what is meant by a narrative. Secondly, she raises the question of the place of "silence". This highlights the issue of what is not said or who does not speak or what point is not made. Lastly, she refers to what is meant by narrative "truth". Narratives are assumed to be stories relating to actual events, even if they make some sort of sense of them as well as relating to fiction within other contexts. "Thus, the construct of narrative is problematized by multidimensionality, patterns of exclusion, and permeable borders between stories that are true fictions and/or fictionalised truths." (Grayson, 1997, p68).

A social constructionist would resolve Grayson's "problem" by accepting the relativity of the reality being conveyed but also acknowledging that it is shared with others and that it is therefore not exclusive. It is multifaceted in that others might add additional elements whilst jointly owning common factors around a construct. A narrative is judged, not by its historical accuracy in all detail, but by its propensity for "fit" in another's social construction of reality, recognising that an individual changes the nature of the reality under discussion each time it is narrated as part of an ongoing sense-making process.

4. Research Method: Cognitive Mapping

I now seek to set out the argument for using cognitive mapping as a means of identifying the elements of the process which occurs when people make a moral decision in the workplace. It will consider the psychological theory behind the development of cognitive maps and the reasons for and against using the technique in empirical research.

The research questions which are being asked in this study are

1. What is the process, if any, that someone goes through when they make a moral decision in the workplace?
2. What are the sources of the predominant influences in any one situation?

The word "process" implies that there is a start, a middle and an end to it and, indeed, writers in the past have attempted to model this process showing it graphically as a linear process (Jones, 1991, Malhotra and Miller, 1998). Any research method needs to allow for the possibility that there may not be such a logical progression – that people may have a number of ideas or concepts in mind when they come to a decision which has a moral element to it. Any method also needs to bear in mind the various strengths of the different influences on the eventual outcome. It also needs to take into

account the potential problem of the dichotomy between moral decisions and moral action referred to in a previous chapter.

Axelrod defines a cognitive map as being "designed to capture the structure of the causal assertions of a person with respect to a particular policy domain, and generate the consequences that follow from this structure" (Axelrod, 1976, p58). Cognitive maps therefore consist of two elements – concepts and causal beliefs which relate to the relationships between the concepts. He maintains that such maps can provide an accurate picture of a person's belief system in any one particular situation. This can then be used either to show how a person *should* behave or as an explanation of why they performed in the way they did. This is the distinction between Axelrod's normative and empirical models.

He identifies cognitive maps as being a means of helping us understand someone's decision-making processes. He identifies the real strength of cognitive maps as being that they are "able to employ the concepts of the decision maker who is being predicted, rather than the concepts of the person who is doing the predicting" (Axelrod, 1976, p223).

A number of different theoretical bases have been used as the foundation for cognitive mapping. Eden and his colleagues have always referred back to Kelly's theory of personal constructs (Jenkins, 1998). Other writers (Axelrod and his colleagues) refer to a number of sources for their theoretical basis. Both Kelly's theories and the writing around schema theory appear to me to be expressing what we might intuit about the processes we use to think through situations and arrive at decisions. I therefore outline both, perceiving them as complementary to each other.

(a) Kelly's theory of personal constructs

Kelly's *Theory of Personal Constructs*, previously referred to as being a base source for the theory behind social constructionism, is also identified as being

the underpinning psychological theory of cognitive maps (Eden, 1988; Huff, 1990).

Colin Eden has been responsible for much of the academic development of the use of cognitive mapping within management research in the UK. He refers to his admiration for Kelly because, not only did he devise an original theory but he also devised a means of putting it into practice (Eden, 1988). The repertory grid technique designed by Kelly to establish individual cognitive mapping processes is still recognised as a useful tool (Fransella and Bannister, 1977; Easterby-Smith, 1980) but is not appropriate to this particular study because of its emphasis on the mathematics involved within the created grid which tend to deflect from its main purpose which is to create a person's system of constructs. It also becomes unwieldy if the grid is larger than 12 x 12 (Eden, 1988) and is generally harder for any research subject to relate to in terms of verifiability. Eden holds the grid to be "constraining in the degree of richness that can be captured" (p3). This is confirmed by Sylvia Brown in her study which seeks to compare the use of repertory grid technique and cognitive maps (Brown, 1992).

Eden outlines his own personal history of thinking around cognitive maps, moving on from Kelly's theory of personal constructs but alleging that the theoretical assertions behind cognitive maps are derived from Kelly's thinking. These are that

1. We make sense of the world through drawing contrasts and similarities.
2. We try to *explain* what is happening in our world.
3. We try to understand things in terms of structuring our concepts in some form of hierarchy.

Eden acknowledges that this last assertion stretches Kelly's theory and goes beyond it because Kelly does not refer to problem-solving or relative values and beliefs.

(b) Schema theory

Schema theory offers a parallel explanation to that of Kelly's personal constructs theory for the graphic representation within cognitive maps. Marshall (1995) traces the origins of schemata back to Plato and Aristotle, through Kant, Bartlett and Piaget. She concludes with a definition of a schema as being "a mental structure centred on an event, situation, experience, or object" (p16). This may or may not include action, a factor promoted by Piaget but not by philosophers. While her interest lies in how students solve mathematical problems, she demonstrates that it is important for someone to access the correct schema in order to solve the problem.

She outlines the eleven characteristics of schemas, classified into three areas of psychological investigation:

"(a) schema formation:

- A schema is constructed by the individual
- Schema formation involves attention and selective processing
- A schema results from a repetition of similar experiences
- No two individuals will have precisely identical schemas

(b) schema contents

- A schema contains abstractions of commonalities in experiences
- Schemas may have as foci either abstract notions or concrete situations
- A schema is neither a concept nor a rule

(c) schema usage

- Schema instantiation may be purposeful or spontaneous
- A schema is a problem-solving agent
- Schema invocation involves analogical reasoning
- A schema may involve both simultaneous and sequential processing."

(Marshall, 1995, p57)

She concludes as follows:

> Schemas develop after many similar and repeated experiences, each of which constitutes a problem for the individual. Schemas are used to interpret the problem and to apply to it as much as possible any relevant prior knowledge, using both parallel and sequential cognitive processing (Marshall, 1995, p58).

The work of Harris will be referred to in greater depth in relation to his thinking in relation to schemas and individuals within organisational culture. However, it is useful to consider part of his contribution at this stage.

> Schemas refer to the dynamic, cognitive knowledge structures regarding specific concepts, entities, and events used by individuals to encode and represent incoming information efficiently. Schemas are typically conceptualised as subjective theories derived from one's experiences about how the world operates that guide perception, memory, and inference (Harris, 1994, p310).

He defines schemas as "mental maps which enable individuals to traverse and orient themselves within their experiential terrain" (p310). He provides an explanation of how people come to share schemas which he claims come about through common experiences.

Schemas can be both representation and process. "Each schema roughly corresponds to a domain of interaction, which may be an object in the usual sense, an attention-riveting detail of an object, or some domain of social interaction" (Arbib et al, 1987, p7)

Fauconnier sees *mental space mappings* as being central to the linking of mental spaces outlined in discourse. He gives as examples such concepts as metaphors and analogy which refer to different domains but provide a linkage between the two. For example, computer *viruses* use the domain of the medical paradigm to refer to technological problems in computers. In doing

so, the language imposes certain properties of the medical context on the computer problem.

> A language expression *E* does not have a meaning in itself; rather, it has a *meaning potential,* and it is only within a complete discourse and in context that meaning will actually be produced. (Fauconnier, 1997, p37).

In summary, Fauconnier analyses language use in terms of its relation to mental spaces and the relationship between them, whether metaphorical or analogical. This, too, confirms previously stated arguments against detailed textual analysis within this project.

Finally, the mapping of schemas or constructs fits well within the social constructionist framework as described earlier. It reflects the aim of the project in terms of gathering mental constructions which are "socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp 110-111).

Stubbart and Ramaprasad summarise the literature relating to representational systems in cognitive science (Stubbart and Ramaprasad, 1990). They criticise cognitive maps for being over-representational in that they lose too much detail. In response, Huff argues that, at the very least, they are a useful tool for summarising and communicating information. Mental maps can hold something which has the same essential characteristics as thought itself. "In this view, the mental map is the knowledge that informants use themselves. Even if current maps fall short of this ideal, we are closer with cognitive mapping to understanding intentional choice than we have been before" (Huff, 1990, p14).

(c) Different types of cognitive maps

In her introductory chapter to *Mapping Strategic Thought*, Huff (1990) describes different types of cognitive maps depending on their purpose and the means with which they are acquired. They range from those which assess attention, association and importance of concepts (using textual analysis) to those which show the structure of argument and conclusion. Since 1990, cognitive maps have become even more diverse and been used across a much wider range of contexts. Of particular pertinence to this study is her reference to maps that show dimensions of categories and hierarchies among concepts. She identifies these maps as having been used to explore the range and nature of choices perceived by decision makers in a given setting. "Since this kind of map usually requires direct inquiry, it offers a means for informants themselves to collaborate in defining the topics of study" (Huff, 1990, p16). She makes the point that mapmakers looking for specific links between concepts make the following assumptions:

1. Thinking involves searching and retrieval from organised memory.
2. Learning involves categorisation – either the learning of new categories or the modification of old.
3. The meaning of any particular concept derives primarily from its contrast or difference from other concepts (cf Kelly).

Huff also refers to what she calls "causal" maps which are based on the idea that causal associations are the major way in which understanding about the world is organised, that causality is the primary form of post hoc explanation of events and that choice among alternative actions involves causal evaluation. Their weakness is that they tend to oversimplify to the extent that there are few contradictory forces in them. Huff groups with this category, systems and influences maps, recognising that influence maps can indicate the strength of influence on an individual's choice. Causal maps might be deemed to reduce that level of choice. As a result, I would prefer to refer to

"influence" maps in order to preserve an implied acknowledgement of an individual's ability to choose in relation to any particular action.

If cognitive mapping is to be used as a method for eliciting the thought processes around moral decision making, it would appear that a technique combining parts of all of the above maps would need to be used.

(d) Methods for acquiring cognitive maps

Axelrod (1976) lays down four guidelines for acquiring cognitive maps:

(a) the method used to gain cognitive maps (CMs) should be unobtrusive.
(b) "the derivation should not require advance specification of the concepts a particular decision maker may use in his cognitive map. Ideally, these concepts, as well as the causal links between them, would come from the data and not from any *a priori* assumptions of the researchers" (p6).
(c) the cognitive map should be tied in to an evaluation theory of decision making. He explains this as meaning that a map should include options, goals, the ultimate utility and the relevant intervening concepts.
(d) the map should be verifiable, valid and reflect accurately the assertions made (and the relationships between them) of the decision maker.

Axelrod maintains that the analysis of textual evidence meets the above criteria according to recognised coding rules, together with the use of questionnaires and, as a third alternative, the open-ended probing interview. Textual analysis will be rejected as being judged inappropriate for this project. Questionnaires are very useful for extrapolating and collating solid facts in isolation but lack a richness of data which is needed to explore the process of decision making. Finally, there is the open-ended probing interview, as mentioned by Axelrod. This can help the research subject explore his or her thought processes and work towards putting them into some sort of order without "disfiguring" them any more than necessary. Where this process can be supported is by the use of graphic imagery in the

shape of a map growing as the interview proceeds, either on paper or on the computer screen.

It is possible to deduce cognitive maps from an interview text and also from documentation. However, this is not generally recommended (Eden and Ackermann, 1998). Eden et al (1992) give some useful tips relating to the elaboration of CMs, in this particular instance, causal maps. They relate the number of constructs obtained to the length of the interview and the skills of the interviewer. They suggest that any coding and analysis of the map is carried out after the interview. However, it is necessary to be constantly aware of the potential problems around generating data which is gathered in an interactive way between researcher and informant (Bood, 1998; Eden and Ackermann, 1998). Bood concludes that rationalisations (or sense-making) are an inherent part of that process. "What one thinks often only becomes clear when thoughts are spoken aloud" (Bood, 1998, p226).

(e) Quantifying maps – is it only a qualitative process?

A number of writers have attempted to quantify the relationships between concepts in maps, resulting in some extremely complicated mathematics (Langfield-Smith and Wirth, 1992; Markham and Mintzes, 1994). It is very tempting to attempt to impose some form of mathematical logic, be it "fuzzy" or more conventional statistical calculations. While having severe reservations about using potentially quantitative methods within a qualitative study, it has already been shown that social constructionist research projects often include a mixture of both methods. The challenge is to use mathematics in a constructive way that does not distort the informant's "message".

(f) Comparing cognitive maps

Langfield-Smith and Wirth (1992) aim to develop a method of comparing causal cognitive maps both over time and between individuals. They start with a causal map using strengths of influence: -3 to -1 for negative influences and +1 to +3 for positive influences. They refer to analysing

cognitive maps in two different ways: the content and the structure of each map. Their research concentrates on the former – the content.

> Content difference is associated with differences in the events that individuals perceive as relevant to a domain (equivalent to differences in elements contained within two or more cognitive maps), and differences in the way that they relate those events (corresponding to differences in the various causal beliefs within one or more cognitive maps) (Langfield-Smith and Wirth, 1992, p1137).

They recognise that cognitive maps do not easily lend themselves to comparison because of the wide variety of elements and causal linkages. They propose a method of comparison which assumes that the *context* of the map is the same for each map being analysed. Thus, they use the example of three managers launching a new alcoholic product and their varying maps. The mathematics then becomes very complicated.

Wang (1996) draws attention to the fact that CMs can be either quantitative or qualitative or even both and cites Eden's maps as being essentially qualitative. However, he decides to take the quantitative route by developing a "neural network model" with which to compare maps. He cites Eden et al (1992) who state that there should be no general approach to the analysis of CMs and that any analysis should have a "particular meaning for an understanding and evaluation of cognitive complexity" (Wang, 1996, p539).

In all three of the above studies, the common ground was that the maps being compared were all of individuals working within the same context. The maps reflected the individuals' perspectives of the same situation. This, at least, presented some common factors to compare within separate maps and, in some instances, some of the concepts were intentionally included in all maps. This, therefore, presents a potential problem for the use of cognitive mapping in drawing out comparisons from data received in different individual contexts.

(g) Potential issues with using cognitive mapping

Jenkins outlines a number of issues apart from the problems of comparison which can occur around the use of cognitive mapping (Jenkins, 1998). He considers the range of different studies for which cognitive mapping has been used and the methods which have been developed as a result. He identifies issues around comparative causal mapping. The first is that of validity which he translates into the question "Have we allowed the respondent to respond in a way which is salient and meaningful to him or her?" (Jenkins, 1998, p240). He, too, refers to the problems of comparing maps. The third issue identified is that relating to reliability and, while he recognises that this might not be appropriate to a qualitative methodology, he equates it with replicability which almost asks the same question of that asked in checking validity. Lastly, the issue of practicability has meant that where large maps have been worked on, concerns relating to availability of subjects over lengthy periods of time have had to be balanced with the need to involve informants in the research at first hand rather than working on secondary documents.

In response to Jenkins' points, it is maintained that a project based on social constructionism for its ontology and epistemology would be seeking to recognise the interaction between researcher and informant within the particular social and historical context of the day on which the interview took place and to be aware that, in a sense, nothing can be replicated. The question of validity needs to be addressed in the actual working method with informants to ensure that they are content to "own" the map which is created.

Another particular issue is that of presentation of data analysis (Laukkannen, 1998). A series of maps can be difficult to access by a reader who is not aware of the particular context to which they refer. Laukkannen recommends keeping it "simple and to the point" (p188).

In conclusion, despite the issues, cognitive mapping as a method of collecting data has the potential to reflect to a greater degree of accuracy the thought processes of the informant.

Cognitive maps provide a holistic picture of an individual's overall perspective, without any loss of detail, enabling the researcher to move beyond the assumption of internal consistency to the detailed assessment of specific concepts within the map (Clarke and Mackaness, 2001, p153).

However, any such claim to accuracy could only be checked by reference back to the informant involved in order to establish the degree of *shared reality* and *ownership*. Whether the informant recognises the resulting map as a reflection of what they were saying about the situation described would provide the test of whether their *reality* had effectively been *shared*.

5. Current qualitative research in business ethics

Lastly, it is necessary to consider the range of qualitative-based work which has already been carried out within the field of business ethics. As previously stated, the dominant paradigm within business ethics is the modernist quantitative approach using conventional statistical methods to analyse questionnaires. However, a number of projects have moved away from this. For example, Vyakarnam et al used focus groups to analyse the way in which small business owners work through ethical dilemmas. The results produced little that was generalisable within the group (Vyakarnam et al, 1997).

Of more direct relevance, the work of Derry takes Kohlberg's and Gilligan's respective theories of moral reasoning of justice and of care and interviews 20 men and 20 women in a particular organisation, asking them to talk about a particular moral conflict. "The interviews were open-ended semi-clinical interviews in which an individual presented an actual moral conflict he/she faced at work and described the situation, the conflict, how he/she evaluated what should be done, and how it was resolved" (Derry, 1987, p32). He then analysed the data in terms of content analysis looking for elements of care or justice.

Apart from being of interest in relation to the results around the debate about gender and moral reasoning, this study appears at first hand to be working very similarly to my project. However, Derry started with the influence of care and justice reasoning and was almost testing hypotheses from existing theory rather than taking the holistic approach to the problem which I have striven to pursue.

More recently, Crane argues that the predominant positivist approach to researching business ethics has constrained the development of theory within this field (Crane, 1999). He supports the case for a more holistic approach to the investigation of issues within business ethics and he identifies a number of issues which have arisen out of existing business ethics research. It has tended to lean towards normative prescriptions without developing a theory base within the field itself, thus hypothesis driven research may not be appropriate and case study work may be a better way of considering research questions within their context. Sampling is an issue in that, because of the breadth of inquiry, no particular sampling strategy will currently lead towards the delivery of general theory. In addition, Crane queries the value of quantification of factors of influence, raises the possibility that quantitative methods impose researcher values, together with a bias derived from social acceptability around the issues involved. Thus, it is unlikely that an executive would deny the fact that their company is "ethical". Finally, Crane denies the possibility of existing research being able to take a holistic approach within the context of the problem. He concludes:

> In essence, then, there is a significant and urgent need for practising business ethics researchers to scale the barricades of positivism's epistemological roadblock and thereby develop a more pluralistic approach, and hence a better informed understanding, of this fascinating and complex subject. (Crane, 1999, p246)

As another example of the qualitative approach within business ethics, Takala and Urpilainen have taken what they term an "interpretive" approach to

researching managerial attitudes to lying at work (Takala and Urpilainen, 1999). They interviewed two managers twice about their attitudes to telling the truth. They concluded that both managers identified honesty, justice and quality as being basic principles in managing. However, they recognised that sometimes honesty is not practicable in terms of telling the truth to everyone. There was a variation in how the concept of "truth" was defined between the two informants. This study also demonstrates how such a project can only inform on the level of what two individual managers thought and believed.

Having discussed methodology and proposed method, the next chapter considers my work with research informants and concludes with a critique of how the chosen methodology and method were tested in practice.

Chapter Four:

Working with Research Informants

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to record my method of working with research informants to gather data for the project. It includes the search for informants willing to take part and a description of the semi-structured interview with each individual, together with issues relating to the "contract" formed.

The software used in the interviewing process was Decision Explorer, published by Banxia Software under the "umbrella" of the University of Strathclyde and developed by Professor Colin Eden.

A secondary aim of this thesis is to "test" philosophical ethical theory to discover how individuals argue within a "real" situation and whether those arguments are mirrored by theory. In doing this, a supplementary question was asked of each informant relating to the alternatives of the teleological or deontological approach.

2. The search for informants

In order for people to be able to help this project, there were a number of criteria that they needed to meet within their life situations:

1. They needed to be in employment (or have recent experience of employment)
2. They needed to come from a diverse range of employers
3. They needed to have a moral dilemma which they were prepared to discuss with me
4. They needed to have the time (1 to 1.5 hours) to spend with me.

(a) Recruiting the pilot informants

I attended two separate sessions of the MBA part-time module on Business Ethics for ten minutes each at the beginning of each session and presented on my project and search for informants. This resulted in an initial seven offers of involvement although one individual withdrew when the matter to be discussed became the potential informant of legal proceedings.

Arrangements were made to meet the resulting six people either at their home, their place of work or on university premises and it was always made clear that the meeting should take place wherever they felt most comfortable and at their convenience.

(b) Recruiting further informants

Encouraged by this initial response, number of different attempts were made to recruit further informants through letters to local Rotary, Round Table and Lions Clubs, and articles in the newsletters of a local business club and the local Chamber of Commerce. These produced no response.

The conclusion was therefore reached that recruitment was most successful where potential volunteers could be met face to face. More opportunities were made available fresh groups of university students; a group of part-time students studying for qualifications under the Institute of Personnel Development and, secondly, another group of part-time MBA students. Three volunteers were gained from the first group and three from the second. In the meantime, a work situation arose in which an informant offered one particular experience for discussion.

An initial data analysis was carried out which tended to indicate that, in terms of influences on moral decisions in the workplace, most had been identified by the first 12 informants. The interviewing process itself was beginning to generate a feeling of "deja vu" within the researcher and an ensuing awareness of the meaning of "saturation" of data in the grounded theory sense. In addition, it was apparent that the amount of information generated

by these 12 interviews was "rich" in terms of Patton's definition of rich data. It was also clear from that initial analysis that the individual's relationship to the employing organisation was crucial in influencing the framework of moral decisions.

A third phase was therefore devised in which it was planned to interview a group of informants who were working within the same organisational and historical context. The staff in a particular department of a higher education institute were emailed and their involvement sought. The department had recently undergone a process of restructuring. Four members of staff responded, three of which brought decisions relating to the restructuring.

3. The contract with informants

Potential informants were asked to be prepared to help in the following ways:

1. to be prepared to talk about a recent decision which they had made that had a moral element within it and agree to the interview being taped
2. to spend 1-1.5 hours in interview with the researcher
3. to complete a short questionnaire giving relevant background
4. to be prepared to verify the coding as being true to the event
5. to notify the researcher of any change of address/contact details within a six month period after the interview.

In return, they were promised the following:

1. total anonymity
2. the non-judgmental attitude of the interviewer
3. that they would have the opportunity to learn from and about the process of cognitive mapping
4. that they would have the satisfaction of knowing that they had contributed to the global increase in knowledge!

It is recognised that the first two points have, in themselves, a moral element within them which reflects the nature of this project. They had been carefully considered before being offered. The need to "care for" the informants in helping them express sometimes quite strong feelings was also taken into account.

(a) Anonymity of informants

An awareness of the profound practical problems of implementing a policy of total confidentiality had given me an additional sensitivity to this issue in that it was clear that it would not be possible to offer confidentiality of any nature in relation to the *content* of the discussion with informants because I would need to publish the resulting maps in order to present the data. However, it was possible to offer anonymity and, in some cases, names have been concealed within transcripts in order to enable this promise to be kept without exception.

(b) Non-judgemental attitude of interviewer

Again, the researcher's own employment experience had taught the importance of being non-judgemental in any "listening" situation. In addition, had this not been the case, my values would have interfered between the informant's meaning within the situation and the reader's interpretation. In listening to the tapes of interview, I might be criticised for colluding, if anything, with the speaker through my use of encouraging "ums".

(c) "Caring" for the informants

It became apparent very early on in my work with research informants that individuals were prepared to expose their feelings and emotions around quite difficult areas. It therefore became essential that this was recognised, that I ensured that they were as emotionally "comfortable" as possible and that I did not challenge or question those feelings or emotions in any way. In work with one individual, concern was expressed at the potential effect of her talking about her chosen situation on herself because it became apparent that

it would not be easy for her. She reassured me that it was what she wanted to do. It would not be right to attempt to measure the outcomes of these interviews in terms of any "healing" process around underlying feelings but it is clear that, to a very limited extent, there was evidence that the process of mapping a difficult situation enabled individuals to see it more clearly and, in some cases, to understand it better for themselves.

4. Background information

In the pilot study, in arranging the interviews, a questionnaire for informants to complete giving details of background information was posted out. This related to the following factors:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnic origin
4. Job title
5. Type of employer
6. Length of time with current employer
7. Length of time in current post.

Following the pilot study, when it became clear that the data became less detailed the longer the length of time between the event discussed and the interview, an extra question was inserted relating to that period of time and the questionnaire, so amended, was used with all informants.

5. The interview process

It was recognised that informants would have spent some time prior to our meeting putting the "story" together in their minds in preparation. They would have felt the necessity to construct something which "made sense" and which could be narrated and scrutinised. It was therefore important to start with the opportunity for them to "tell the story" in their own words. This part

of the interview was taped and transcribed as an "explanation" of the subsequent cognitive map. A probing question technique was used sometimes when it was not clear about the situation being described but otherwise I intervened or commented very little.

Decision Explorer software installed on a laptop computer was then opened with a pre-prepared file relating to the particular informant, based on a base map which had five different styles of concepts and three different styles of links between concepts. The informant was asked, first, to identify the decision moment and to give it a label. In some cases it became quite difficult to identify a particular point in time to analyse when a situation causing a dilemma was ongoing or spread over a period of time. This point is taken up later in the thesis.

Having identified the decision point, each informant was asked to identify the "thoughts" in their head at that particular time. These were dropped onto the map in random order and random placing. When the informant felt that all concepts had been identified, we moved on to consider the relative strength of influence of each of the concepts. Taking concepts in turn, the informant chose one of three different levels of strengths indicated graphically through three different styles of link (width of line and arrow) between concepts and the decision, either towards it (in support of it) or away from it (working against the decision). Lastly, for mapping processes, we talked together about the nature of the influences. I asked the question "if you could picture someone sitting on your shoulder putting a concept in your head, who would it be for each one?" We then took each concept in turn, starting with the most obvious and moving on to the more difficult, and the informant identified the source of the influence as she or he felt it. Each different source was allocated a different style of concept and labelled by the research informant. Thus, for example, Style 1 became "peer influence" if that was how the informant identified it, Style 2 "individual values", continuing until all concepts had been treated in this way. The concept styles had been previously set up in the base map to have different colour texts.

As a last element in the mapping process, the informant was asked the following questions:

1. Are there any other concepts that you've thought of now that we've omitted?
2. Do you recognise this map as being a correct "picture" of your situation?
3. Would you like a hard copy printed off and sent to you?

In every instance informants agreed that it accurately reflected their situation and requested a copy of the map to be sent to them with the exception of two informants who did not require copies.

A final question was asked:

> "In making your decision, did you consider more what to do that was *right* in itself or were you more concerned with the nature of the end results, the consequences?"

As example of the interview process, a transcript of the whole interview with Angela is included at Appendix B.

The resulting information shared with the researcher will be analysed in the following chapters. However, issues relating to the nature of the strategy around the nature of the sample can be appropriately raised at this point. It was the aim in reaching informants who were prepared to talk about particularly difficult situations to attempt to get as wide a range of people in work as possible. Thus, the aim was to look at a wide age range of individuals from as broad an employment background as possible. It could be argued that this was not achieved completely because of there being a common background of an involvement with higher education. However, in terms of their work roles, certainly the first 12 informants came from a range of employment backgrounds. The strategy of seeking a wide range was, in Patton's terms, a purposeful sampling strategy which related to typical case scenarios in the first 12 informants. The last four informants were sought as

part of a theory-driven sampling strategy in that issues had emerged from the initial analysis which needed to be explored further within the next four informants. As it happened, the fourth informant's decision explored did not relate to the common context but still was able to contribute to the total of the project's informants. This gave the project 16 narratives and cognitive maps to work with.

6. Method of analysis: the cognitive maps

The strengths of the sources identified by informants either *for* the decision (a positive figure) or *against* the decision (a negative figure) were listed against the informants' initial coding of the nature of the influence. I totalled these and re-coded the nature of the influence to provide some uniformity for comparison between maps. Table 1 overleaf shows this process for Angela's map.

The following sources of influence were identified as a result of this process over 16 informants.

- Individual
- Organisational (i.e. employer)
- Peer/group (internal to organisation)
- Peer/group (external to organisation)
- Professional
- Society
- Other (one occurrence only).

Angela								
Concept	**Code**	**CK code**						**K=5**
		Organisational	**Peer/group**	**Individual**	**Peer/group external**	**Professional**	**Societal**	**Other**
1 To blame manager at disciplinary hearing	(Decision)							
2 manager more powerful	Organisational influence	-1						
3 Employee being scape-goated	Personal value			3				
4 manager had instructed not to send memos	Personal value			2				
5 manager high profile	Organisational influence	-2						
6 people at risk by withholding of info	Professional value					3		
7 concerned about quality of relationship with parallel team	Peer influence		-1					
8 manager involved carrying out interview	Organisational influence	-2						
9 worried about career prospects	Organisational influence	-1						
10 worried about appearing unreasonable	Societal value						-1	
11 supported by own manager and team	Peer influence		3					
12 worried about effect of evidence on employee's job future	Personal value			-2				
13 not given important info in past	Professional value					0		
14 Don't like employee	Personal value			-1				
15 She was partially to blame	Personal value			-2				
16 frustrated	Personal value			1				
	Totals	-6	2	1		3	-1	-1
						Int/Ext	-4/3	

Table 1.

A further analysis was carried out which looked at the balance between influences external to the organisation (individual, group/peer, professional (except in one case), society) and those internal to it (organisational, group/peer). In addition, I analysed the apparent reasoning system used by each informant to allocate a definition of the stage of moral development at which they were arguing according to Lawrence Kohlberg's theories. The literature around this subject has been explored elsewhere but a summary of the six stages is to be found at Appendix F to the thesis. I have fallen into the practice of referring to them as K-stages and an individual informant is "labelled" only for the sake of convenience as a K3 for example. It was reasonably clear how to classify each informant's argument but I am aware that it was done, in a sense, intuitively. While Kohlberg's researchers were trained to work with individuals, it is not clear that their final analysis of K-stages was any less intuitive than mine. It does provide a useful comparison between informants and the fact that it appeared such a clear process of classification served to support Kohlberg's theory of different *types* of argument.

The combination of the maps, the information shown by the above initial analysis, and the background information provided by informants was then analysed according to classes identified by Schatzman and Strauss (1973). They outline a process of discovering classes and their linkages by defining three different types of classes:

1. Common classes, for example, names, gender, age. These are normal groupings which are usually used within society
2. Special classes which relate to particular groupings within the subject under study (they give the example of types of leadership, structure, etc, depending on the context)
3. Theoretical classes which are discovered and manipulated through the process of analysis by the researcher. They belong to the researcher and they change and develop during the process of analysis.

Thus my analysis started with the common classes of age, gender and type of employer. I then identified five special classes (length of time with employer, length of time in post, nature of employment, K-stages and the time between the interview and the decision). Theoretical classes related to the distinction between a decision and a dilemma, the various sources of influence, and the comparison with philosophical theory. I used the Decision Explorer software produced by Banxia as a means of sorting and controlling this process of analysis, generating a cognitive map of my emerging ideas around the analysis of each class.

The relationships between the different classes were examined thoroughly and therefore cross-relate to each other. For this reason, one particular theoretical class which emerged early needs to be outlined at this point. It became apparent that, where an individual's total "score" of strength of influences was very low or in the negative, this was an indication that the decision had been a particularly difficult one. The positive scores for the decision were balancing or almost balancing the negative scores of influences against the decision. It appeared that the mathematics of the influences was serving to highlight the relative difficulty of the decision and that those decisions which were balanced or nearly balanced were worthy of separate investigation because of their very nature. I decided to take scores of between +6 and –6 (total range +43 to -6) as reflecting this close balance within the decision and to define them, for the purposes of analysis, as "dilemmas" as well as decisions. Six such dilemmas were identified within the total 16 decisions and they are examined as a separate class as well as within the total.

In quoting the concepts raised by the informants within their cognitive maps, I have used the symbol * * in order to differentiate from quotations taken direct from their accompanying narrative.

7. Method of analysis: the narratives

Alongside and, also, temporally preceding the maps, were the narratives as told by each informant (with one exception due to taping failure (Frederick)).

These were the stories, relatively uninfluenced by the researcher, as prepared and ready to present by the informants. They had previously been invited to talk to me about a particular decision and arrangements had been made to meet as a result of them offering such a narrative. The narratives therefore represent a prime source of information in relation to the situation described. A strength and a weakness of cognitive mapping one particular decision was that it tended to focus on one moment in time. This meant that it enabled us to consider that moment in great detail but it also excluded all that had happened around that moment. The narrative provides the background and a series of events as well as a "fresh" evaluation of the situation.

Labov (1972) identifies four different types of evaluation within narratives. The first relates to external evaluation by which he means that the narrator steps back from the narration and tells the listener what the point is. The second is evaluation which is embedded within the narrative so that the narrator might describe her evaluative thoughts at that time or describe something that was said at that point in the story. A third form of evaluation is to tell the listener what people did in terms of their evaluation of events. Lastly, Labov recognises that the first two types of evaluation tend to suspend the narrative and intervene in its flow. That very suspension can be used as an evaluative input in itself so the fourth type that Labov identifies is the suspension of action within the narrative when the sequence of events is "paused" for some particular evaluative comment.

Labov's work does not reflect upon the significance of evaluation within a narrative which relates to a moral decision. However, it is clear that, in telling the story around such a decision, the narrator's evaluation of that process is going to be crucial to our understanding of it. Again, because of the very context of the story, it is likely that it will reflect upon the wrongs and rights of the situation and express principles which are being applied by the narrator in that setting. An analysis has therefore been carried out of the 16 narratives of the research informants which identifies that evaluative process and which is then coded by the researcher in terms of the underpinning values which appear to be being implied by the informant.

Labov has imposed a fairly rigid structure on narratives which does not allow for the flexibility of body language and tone. I therefore included events which appear to be factual within the context of the text but which were said in interview in such a way that they implied a moral dimension to them. An example of this might be found in Edith where she says "So I went in at the weekend because I knew the codes to everywhere and I went in at the weekend". Because I interviewed her and observed her body language as she said this, I saw her distress at that point and can therefore confidently infer the following underpinning principle "It is wrong to enter work premises with the intention of doing something improper." A hint that she was feeling slightly stressed at this point, in telling somebody else that she had done something she felt to be wrong, can be found in the fact that she repeated the words "I went in at the weekend". In doing this, I also felt that it would be helpful to make the distinction between principles that related to the actions of others and those relating to self. I was looking for a potential discrepancy between the two but found none.

The narratives were analysed by identifying the informants' *evaluative* comments and sections within them. An example of how this analysis was carried out is given for Angela at Appendix E. It serves to identify the underpinning principles within the evaluation of the narrative. Very often the principles are repeated and expressed in a different way as a means of stressing the importance of them. In most cases, the whole point of the problem was stated in an evaluative way and this is summarised as follows in Table 2.

Informant	Summary of Problem
Angela: Do I tell the whole truth . . . or do I blame the manager?	It is right to tell the truth but in doing so, it's wrong that someone should suffer as a result when another individual was responsible as well.
Bob:	No summary
Colin: My dilemma was simple really – the company's interests on the one side were obviously important to me . . . On the other side, these payments were illegal.	It is right to do one's best for an employer as an employee but it is wrong to be negotiating illegal payments.
Don:	No summary
Edith:	No summary
Frederick:	No transcript
Gaynor: My dilemma was "what do I do about this? Do I take out a grievance procedure against her or do I just ignore it and bide my time and go?"	It is right to take out a grievance against bullying line managers but it is also right to ignore what was happening on a day-to-day basis but try to change jobs.
Helen: It was really a dilemma how much effort I put into it and my reaction to her and the feeling of doing the collection . . . the first two I got a lot more money and I got less for her but it was also the dilemma – the problem was it was the end of the month and people were short of money and I wasn't very encouraging and enthused to ask people to give money.	It is right to feel aggrieved at an individual's bad treatment of one and it is right to want to reflect this in one's behaviour in some way but it is wrong to try less hard in collecting for a leaving present than for others previously.
Isabel: No summary	

Joanne: And there were a lot of things going on which as part of my job I knew about but wasn't actually able to tell these people and it affected their lives, their livelihood, where they worked, how they worked, who they worked for.	People have a right to know relevant information in relation to their future career and livelihood but it is also right to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information if required to do so by an employing organisation.
Ken: We knew, suspected that some of it was, well may have been suspect in some way or another so the dilemma was as to whether we should actually go back and revisit the whole lot or whether we should actually ignore it and submit the data.	It is right to be honest about the accuracy of data to funders but it is difficult to confess that the accuracy might not be of the required standard.
Leo: What he was going to do was to try to rally round and rebel against it and basically go on strike . . he's the sort of chap that thinks things out but I think under that sort of animosity, under that sort of pressure, he may make the wrong decision.	It is good to support a friend but it is wrong to support a colleague who is working on a personal crusade and and inciting staff to strike.
Mark: Then it was going to create a mess somewhere along the lines so I had to take a quick decision that s/he should be allowed to apply even though it went against several principles I had little choice but to do that I felt . . . that was the dilemma.	It is right to follow a policy negotiated on a national basis but it is right to treat all employees equally and equitably.

Neil: And one or two members of staff have been particularly persistent in their opposition to that claiming things like "this is unfair" "I can't do this" "I should not be expected to do this". Now when they say things like "this is unfair" that raises a moral issue so far as I am concerned and that places me I would say in a dilemma because I think there is a moral issue but I think the moral issue is whether to say "OK" and keep everything sweet and I understand what they're saying and I'll give in to them which in terms of popularity would be easy but what I tried to do and it has happened with a very close friend who hardly speaks to me now.	It is right that all members of staff should be expected to carry out the same amount of work but it is right that staff should like and respect their manager and that the manager should be popular. It is right that friends should support each other.
Owen: I thought "well, you know, it was in the interests of any of our members to be able to go for that position and we were keeping the (department) leadership to what they had said they would do" and the normal equal opportunities issues in advertising nationally were being set aside because of the redundancy issues. So the fact that I personally stood to gain from it was no reason for me in my union hat to not pursue that. I would have done so even if I hadn't been personally interested.	It is right for a union representative to act in the best interest of his or her members and it is not right for that individual to gain personal advantage through his or her union position

Penny: So in the back of one's mind is always that question "am I being too led by what his perception is and not sufficiently led by her decision which was her decision to resign? Am I doing it for that particular reason or is it because she was a very good member of staff and if there was any chance of her coming back it would be very nice if she could?"	It is right to be open and honest with colleagues and it is right to respect their decision but it is wrong to take into account a self-interest in persuading her to go against her decision.

Table 2.

Further analysis of the narratives would have led the project into more detailed textual analysis than I could justify, having presented the argument against it in the previous chapter. Analysis of the coding of the concepts of the cognitive maps was acceptable because the informants were involved in the initial coding and had provided the concepts. The potential for distorting the overall meaning of the maps was therefore less while the informants shared the process of interpretation and took on "ownership" of the maps and their content in accepting that they reflected the situation that they had described fairly accurately.

8. Comparing maps and narratives

It is very clear that the maps and narratives complement each other in many ways. In most cases, the availability of both the map and the narrative enhances an understanding of the decision or dilemma by the reader. Very often, part of the process which benefited the informant the most was the "telling of the story" and, in some cases, they appear to have related less well to the map. Others felt able to develop (explore) the story through the map which provides extra underpinning detail to the original story, particularly in that the maps allowed emotions to be revealed and accounted for.

One way in which the narrative helped me was that, originally, I made the assessment of the K-stage using the map and, in one particular case, was

unclear as to whether the individual involved was arguing at a level of K4 or K5. Analysis of the narrative confirmed the assessment at K4.

The narratives thus provide a richness which complements the tendency to dryness of the maps enabling the reader to gain a greater understanding through the use of both.

9. Critique of Project Methodology and Method

In the process of analysing the information obtained from the project's informants it became clear that the method of gaining such information steered and influenced resulting findings. It is therefore appropriate to review the usefulness or otherwise of the methods and underpinning methodology for achieving any answers to the research question. The original purpose has been to investigate the nature of the process of making a moral decision in the workplace. The social constructionist perspective has involved an awareness of the relationship between the researcher and the informants and the resulting social interaction which inevitably influenced the quality of the information obtained. It has also provided an emphasis on the social nature of individuals making moral decisions at work in terms of their relationships with others in their working environment and the influences upon them deriving from a variety of social groupings. However, it has also meant that, from a group of 16 informants, it is not possible to make any universalisable generalisations. Rather, it has sought to enlighten the reader in describing what is involved in the reality of the informants in facing problems at work which have a moral dimension.

One of the tests of whether the project has succeeded is whether another person reading the cognitive maps and the points which have been pulled out of them can "make sense" of it all in that it also relates to their reality and also adds to their knowledge. This is something only the reader can decide for himself or herself. The aim has been not to distort the maps and

narratives to such an extent that the conclusions cannot be traced back into the words and concepts of the informants themselves.

A number of constraints can be identified which are caused by the methods used. The cognitive maps may be deemed to simplify issues to such an extent as to distort the original picture away from its contextual reality. However, in my defence, all informants with one exception, when offered the opportunity to receive a copy of their "map" wished to do so. All acknowledged that the map reflected how they saw their particular situation and all were involved throughout the process of collecting information in influencing it to maintain its relationship to their reality.

The cognitive maps sought a moment in time which was the "decision". In practice, this was sometimes not quite so easy to identify and the fluidity of the nature of the decision-making was sometimes pushed into a false time framework through seeking to take a "snapshot" of the decision itself.

My reluctance to undertake detailed textual analysis has meant that I have had to look at a wide range of information which, although it was coded to a certain extent, retained a relationship to its social and historical context within the narratives and maps. While not being able to generalise outside the 16 informants' experiences, this has meant that I have not been able to analyse the data to the extent of sufficient detail that others might have wished. However, where general trends do appear, they are all the more strong and influential for being that much more obvious. An example would be the fact that, with little variation, all informants identified independently and without influence from the researcher, similar sources of influence on their thought processes across a spectrum of different situations.

The range of backgrounds of informants was from that of executive to manager at director level. This is a well-researched group well able to express their thought processes and it would have been good to have been able to attract a wider sample of informants. Similarly, it was disappointing not to be able to include volunteers from diverse cultures as this would have

added a welcome and interesting dimension to the project. However, the nature of the subject for discussion is a sensitive one and I am grateful to all who offered their experience and their time.

On the positive side, the cognitive maps and the narratives provide information which is rich according to Patton's definition (Patton, 1990). Together, they enlighten the reader around the nature of the experiences of the informants in facing a problem at work with a moral dimension. The method of talking to individuals about historical events has ensured that the "gap" between intention and action is overcome. We have information relating to actual situations in the workplace rather than the theoretical intentions of research informants considering hypothetical case studies.

In conclusion, research methods have been chosen which meet the criteria of a social constructionist methodology. They seek to keep the informants' situations rooted within their historical and social context. Having identified the aims and objectives of the research project, defined the methodology and decided on appropriate methods of collecting and collating data, it is now possible to move on to consider how the work with informants has enhanced our knowledge about what happens when someone makes a moral decision in the workplace, considering existing theory and comparing it with the way in which informants described their experiences.

Chapter Five:

The nature of a decision

1. Introduction

In investigating an individual's moral decision made in the workplace, the first element of the research question to examine is the nature of the concept of *decision.* The purpose of this chapter is to consider issues around the construct of *decision* as perceived through a multidisciplinary perspective, embracing contributions from philosophy, psychology and organisational theory, each of which has provided a different element to a holistic approach to the concept and then to compare it with the approach to decision-making demonstrated by the project's informants.

The aim of my research is to investigate how the individual makes a moral decision within the contextual framework of being a member of an organisation. There is a separate but large collection of research relating to organisational decision-making and, while it is helpful to look to it for possible definitions of decisions, I have deemed it not relevant to my main purpose. Sometimes it has been important to recall that distinction when the literature appears unclear as to whether it is referring to an individual making a decision *within* an organisation or an organisation making a decision for itself. The nature of a collective decision is inevitably different from that of an individual.

I begin with asking the question, "What is a decision?" and then consider what is involved in the making of any decision, the identifiable elements within a decision and the degree of *process*, using Gaynor's and Ken's cognitive maps to illustrate the diversity of the nature of a decision. I then consider the separate definition of a dilemma while comparing theory with evidence of the approach of the project's informants. Chapter Eight will consider in greater detail the element of a decision which makes it "moral" (that is, having an element within it which means that the resultant action

might impinge on the welfare of others) or "ethical" (that is, the "right" thing to do).

2. What is a decision?

> A decision is an act of resolving deliberation by a *marking of intention* to act (Magill, 1997, p87, original emphasis).

Magill offers the above definition of "decision" and asserts that decisions thus resolve uncertainty about what to do, concluding a period of deliberation. However, he raises two problems in relation to this definition. The first relates to the distinction between the *intention* to act and the *action* itself. This is significant when it comes to struggling with moral issues and doing right or wrong. Elsewhere I shall criticise Kohlberg, for example, for judging stages of moral development on theoretical arguments, arguing that there is a recognised "gap" between what one might think is right to do in theory and what one does in practice. Which end of this process, if it can be called such, is the decision? Should the definition of a decision embrace both intention *and* action? This leads to an issue also identified by Magill. Sometimes it is not possible to identify the moment of deciding to act and, indeed, it is recognised in law that it is possible to act without first having the intention to act (Mintzberg and Waters, 1990). The difference between murder, which involves a deliberate intention to kill someone, and manslaughter which recognises that there was no prior plan to kill someone (for example, killing someone through dangerous driving is usually an accidental act without previous intention) are an illustration of the distinction between intention and action. Thus we might have either an intention to act on its own with no action ("the road to hell is paved with good intentions"!), an action which has not been considered beforehand, or an intention to act followed by an action.

It is clear that decision-making involves some form of relationship to action whether it results from it or not, either directly or indirectly. Are there other elements which we can identify which relate to the nature of a decision and

help to define it? Four other factors are involved – that of information, of choice, of debate and of awareness.

We depend on information with which to make our decision. We may consciously make a decision about which information to include within the decision but whatever information we gather, either consciously or not, we take into account in our decision. Very often, we are judged on whether we took into account all relevant knowledge available to us in making a decision (for example, a judicial decision). Often, too, we choose to ignore certain facts if other factors are stronger influences. For example, if I smoked, I might choose to ignore all the research relating to potential damage to my health.

The second element within the construct of a decision is that of choice. We know when we have a number of practical and possible options open to us and that these are often mutually exclusive. I am aware of the ongoing debate around free will and determinism (for example, Magill, 1997) and the effect of this debate on the nature of decisions. For the purpose of this thesis, whether libertarians or determinists are right, I have assumed that, because we intuitively *feel* that we have a choice within certain situations, that that choice is *real* to us, and that we can then state from a social constructionist point of view that that freedom exists for us.

The third element within a decision relates to the nature of the debate. With whom do we discuss the options? Mostly – ourselves (Billig, 1987). The nature of the conscious rhetoric involved when faced with a particularly difficult situation to resolve ranges through all the information available to us as we attempt to make sense of the situation and to resolve potential problems. Handling all the available information can be a challenge in itself and in *Judgment and Choice* (1987) Hogarth shows that an inability to process information leads people to adopt mental "strategies" that simplify a judgement but which, in doing so, tends to lead toward the introduction of systematic biases.

Goldstein and Weber (1997) promote the theory that thought processes used within decision making are directed by the content of the decision and its context, using the term "domain specificity". They describe four different broad categories of decision making.

1. *Nondeliberative decision making*. This includes the routine action which is hardly considered but can also embrace choosing at random or whim.

2. *Associative deliberation.*

> In associative deliberation, the decision maker is not actively guiding the process of deliberation by following a well-defined procedure so much as she is being buffeted by the stream of considerations that come to mind. Each successive consideration inclines the decision maker toward a particular course of action, either augmenting or counteracting the effects of previous considerations. The decision is resolved when the cumulative effects of the considerations sufficiently incline the decision maker toward a course of action (Goldstein and Weber, 1997, p595).

3. *Rule-based deliberation*, comparing the choices available against particular rules which apply in the situation.

4. *Schema-based deliberation.* Here Goldstein and Weber give as an example the process of a jury making sense of given evidence, creating choices and then matching a causal model from the "narrative" produced to an available choice alternative.

Which strategy is adopted will depend on a number of factors and these include the amount of knowledge held by the decision maker around the subject and the semantic content *per se* in that a particular cultural usage might direct into a particular decision making strategy.

Thus, the process of sense-making and of internal debate is complex and is described by Chia as a means of rationalising our reality. "It acts to reduce equivocality and to punctuate our field of experience thereby helping to configure a version of reality" (Chia, 1994, p803). However, the nature of the debate involved is one element within the complex construct which is the decision.

The fourth and last element of the decision construct is that which relates to whether a decision is taken on a habitual basis and with a certain awareness or not. The concept of decision tends to imply decisions which we make consciously and which are not habitual. I am not always aware of deciding to change gear when driving around a bend in the road which I travel every day. On an unknown road, I would consciously be deciding the best gear to be in as I approach the bend. However, when do we know that we are consciously making a decision? Is the decision only at that point of consciousness? If we were not conscious of the decision, was it our decision, even though an action has followed?

While recalling the previous caveat in relation to the danger of confusing organisational theory with theory relating to individuals in organisations, I wish to refer to Mintzberg and Waters' work on studying deciding in organisations which illuminates the lack of structure around decision making within organisations and, I argue, also for individuals (Mintzberg and Waters, 1990). They refer to the commonly held belief that organisations take decisions. In their work in researching organisations, they found that what they in fact were investigating were the resulting *actions* of the organisation, for example, new shops being opened, new staff being taken on. They found it difficult correspondingly to identify the actual decision.

> If a decision is really a *commitment* to action, then the trace it leaves behind in an organisation can range from a clear statement of intent – as in the recorded minute of a meeting – to nothing. (Mintzberg and Waters, 1990, p2, original emphasis).

In pursuance of this argument, Robert Chia maintains that recent thinking around decision-making in organisations has turned it into an explanatory principle rather than an explanation in itself. He refers to it as a "conceptual invention" (Chia, 1994, p794) and argues that this explains the problems of tracing the real "point" at which it occurs.

> Deconstructing the concept of 'decision' is a 'ground-clearing' exercise intended to pave the way for a more symmetrically naïve approach to understanding the day-to-dayness of human activities as ongoing collective accomplishments rather than as a consequence of individual intentional choices (Chia, 1994, p804).

We thus arrive at a particularly fluid concept of decision-making which relates in some form to an action or intention to act. However, it is apparent that very often we make a decision *not* to act and that therefore this type of "negative" decision is equally valid but even more difficult to identify because its result is that nothing happens or changes. Any knowledge of that decision by a wider audience would depend on the individual stating that she had made that decision. It is also possible for a series of events to be interpreted historically as a decision that led to action where, possibly, no *actual* decision could be identified. Mintzberg and Waters' work on attempting to track decisions and resultant actions within organisations confirms that (Mintzberg and Waters, 1990).

3. Gaynor's decision

Gaynor was a social services manager facing behaviour from her line manager which she found particularly difficult. Her story tells of a number of incidents which brought the problems to a head and she had identified moral factors within her situation which caused her to volunteer spontaneously to me to tell me her story. The story itself spanned a number of years and involved a number of choices within it at various times. Having heard the story, we had to identify one decisive moment in time to analyse through the

cognitive mapping process. She decided to focus on a negative decision which was not to take out a grievance procedure against her manager. The effect of this decision was that she took no action. An additional factor relating to it was that it was repeated as a decision on an almost daily basis as she sought to make sense of her situation and work her way through it.

I have identified theory relating to the *type* of decision (Goldstein and Weber, 1997) and the separate elements of a decision which need to be present in order for it to meet our construct of what a decision is. Applying Goldstein and Weber's types (*non*-deliberative decision-making, associative deliberation, rule-based deliberation and schema-based deliberation) to Gaynor's description of her situation, it would appear to fit best their definition of associative deliberation in that it did involve the "buffeting" of events to which she reacted and lived through without seeking to influence them to any great extent. The fact that her *decision* was a decision not to take action would tend to support that conclusion.

Does it contain all four elements of a decision which have been identified in theory (information, choice, debate and consciousness)? Certainly, Gaynor identifies a number of concepts which informed her at the time (for example *needing salary/mortgage to pay*, *other people had failed grievances*, *always met deadlines and expectations*). There was a valid choice for her in deciding whether to proceed with a grievance against her manager in that the opportunity existed for her to do so. The debate about how to handle the situation was ongoing within her life as events occurred and she had to react to them. Certainly she was conscious of the problems and was reflecting upon ways of resolving them on a regular basis.

4. Ken's decision

Ken is a manager within a college of further education who identified that data submitted to funding authorities was not consistent or one hundred per cent accurate and he made the decision to inform funders of this with a view to correcting the situation. In terms of the type of decision, it would appear

to fall within the category of rule-based deliberation. Ken is very clear about the rules involved (for example, *had seen in other orgs money being returned and criminal proceedings*, *getting caught out*, *doing the right thing*, *loyalty to funders*). He used information in coming to the decision to tell funders about the problem (*a lot of money involved*, *had seen in other orgs money being returned and criminal proceedings*). He had choice in that he could have kept quiet. He carried out a debate about what to do in that his cognitive map shows both positive indicators (for the decision) and negative (against). Finally, he made the decision fully consciously and aware of the consequences.

In considering Goldstein and Weber's definition of non-deliberative decisions and schema-based decisions, and applying them to the sixteen stories shared by this project's informants, it would seem unlikely that we would find decisions which are non-deliberative because of the very nature of the situations which I sought. Similarly, I would not expect to discover any schema-based decisions within the contexts in which I was seeking information. In practice, Goldstein and Weber's definitions are upheld by empirical data which also confirm the four elements of the construct of a decision, being information, choice, debate and consciousness.

5. Decision-making: the process involved?

A number of different attempts have been made to identify the nature of the process involved within decision-making and specific examples of this were given in the introduction to this thesis in relation to moral decision making in the workplace. I wish to review here the literature which seeks to describe some aspect of process from within the paradigm of decision theory.

In 1997, Goldstein and Hogarth published a collection of articles, *Research on judgment and decision making: Currents, connections and controversies*, which aimed to pull together current controversies and themes within research relating to judgements and decision-making. Much of the work contained within Goldstein and Hogarth appears to shed some useful light on

the process, if such a process exists, of making a decision. It is clear that we tend to select aspects of a potential "toolkit" when faced with a particular situation; that we need to be able to manipulate the information we require and adopt particular strategies to enable that to happen and that a number of different factors apply depending on the nature and context of the decision.

What is also emerging is the lack of structure around decision-making. At any time, we might choose to select a particular process to enable the argument with ourselves to "make sense". We might decide to consider specific elements of a quandary first before proceeding to others in order to better measure potential consequences. We might seek further information on which to base a decision or we might decide on a "gut reaction". What steers the way we handle any one situation is a series of diverse factors. How does this affect a decision in the work place? Certainly, we have to reject the assumption that managerial decisions can be analysed and explained through the examination of "complete data, well-defined objective functions and rigorously logical choice processes" (Eden and Spender, 1998, p2). Eden and Spender view the manager as making decisions within a framework which has been created by that individual, in the light of an inadequate amount of information and a degree of uncertainty.

> Instead of defining the manager as a computing device, we define her or him as a key actor who invents or creates a bounded field of decision possibilities which is then navigated in the process of choice. Our inquiry must cover both the boundary of this field and the terrain to be navigated. By definition, we are not able to assume the nature of the manager's answers *a priori*. We do, on the other hand, assume that we are able to gain access to the personal model which the manager has created, and in the process through which its creator navigates its terrain (Eden and Spender, 1998, p3).

It has also been recognised that we start, before any particular decision, in conflict and, having made our choice, we remain in conflict. The conflict does not disappear but we have worked out a way of working *through* it

(Schick, 1997). This returns us to Chia's description of a decision being a rationalising of our reality as we attempt to make sense of and find a way forward through a conflict of situations.

Turning to the evidence on this provided by informants, in many cases, it was difficult to identify a moment in time when a decision was being made. Informants came with a story to tell which involved a series of events, interactions and decisions within the totality of their situation. One of the constraints of the cognitive mapping process was the need to focus down on, almost, a moment in time where one could take a "snapshot" of the concepts coming into play within, very often, quite a complex series of events. An example of this is Gaynor's situation where she lived with the behaviour of her line manager over a length of time and, in order to "capture" the decision, we had to concentrate on a particular time. Again, the nature of the decision brought to the project varied enormously from those which were clear-cut one-off decisions (12 of the total of 16) to those which recurred over a period of time or on a regular basis (four situations). One of these was a decision made every month by Bob to falsely claim the cost of driving business miles. Another was a decision *not* to do something (Gaynor) which recurred over a period of time while being subjected to harassment by her line manager. I had asked people to talk about a moral decision that they had had to make in the workplace and they brought with them narratives which explained the historical context and the nature of the relationships involved with other "players". They were clear, however, that there was a decision to make or a problem to solve but sometimes there were multiple decisions within the narrative and we had to choose one in particular.

The introduction to this thesis drew attention to the attempts to define a *model* of the *process* of making a moral decision in the workplace. Is it possible to impose such models on the informants' decisions? For the purpose of this analysis, I intend to take the model offered by Malhotra and Miller (1998) who have synthesized previous models and have identified five different factors within a moral decision in the workplace which also have a temporal order, starting with the first and ending with the last.

1. Awareness
2. Perception of problem
3. Ethical judgement
4. Determination
5. Action.

This type of model implies that there is a beginning, a middle and an end and that there is, therefore, a process to be followed in some form of quasi-logical order. What happens in practice? To begin with, I intend to take what appears, on the surface, to be a fairly straightforward decision as an example. Penny wanted to keep a colleague in employment within the organisation for the colleague's sake and for the sake of the organisation because she was good at her job. Along the way, she had other problems around the confidentiality of discussions with the colleague's partner. This situation continued over a number of months. As it developed, it would appear that she would definitely have been aware of the need to make a moral decision around her colleague's future and that her perception of the problem altered as she gained more information about the situation (for example, the colleague's partner's intervention). During the situation, she was making a number of moral decisions apart from the overall strategic choice which was to try to persuade her colleague to consider a return to her post. An example of this would have been not to tell her colleague that her partner had been in touch with her. Following the judgement, Malhotra and Miller identify the need for a determination or resolution of the problem which then leads to action. When I consider Penny's position, it is hard to see a process which starts and ends. Rather, it is a non-symmetrical pattern of all the above elements and more which feed into each other, influence each other, almost cycle within the situation and result in behaviour of a particular type.

The more complex decisions seem to confirm that these elements (awareness, perception, judgement, intention and action) are present but are all in the nature of influences within the particular context. Their significance is defined by the individual involved and their relationship to events around

them. Sometimes this is a conscious process; at other times, less so. Thus, it appears that the levels of awareness and perception change, depending on the nature of the problem. For example, does Bob go through all those elements of Malhotra and Miller's model every time he completes a travel expenses claim form? How did Gaynor's decision not to take out a grievance procedure against her manager demonstrate intention or, indeed, action? Angela went into an interview intending to take a particular action and actually found herself doing another. No pattern emerges from the experiences of these sixteen informants which might be deemed to be a *model*. Each individual uses the tools available to them to react as they think best and those tools are multiple and infinitely variable. What appears to happen in practice is that Malhotra and Miller's elements of the process become aligned more with the separate elements of decision-making identified earlier in this chapter.

This leads on to the question of whether it is possible to *judge* a decision by its *quality* (rather than by the nature of its consequences). What makes a good decision? If each individual is doing their "best" within their given circumstances (abilities, information available, experience), how can we say whether the decision is a good one or not? I am not referring to the moral content here (the right or wrong) but to the type of structure that the individual used in coming to the decision. Should we be asking such questions as "did the individual use all the information available to them?", for example? Since it appears impossible to be informed ourselves of the evidence on such matters, it therefore becomes a fruitless exercise in attempting to make any such judgement around the qualitative nature of a particular decision. We cannot say "x was a good decision, but y was a bad one" because we will never be a party to all the elements which would need to inform our judgement.

Can we then describe the making of a decision as an identifiable process, having progress from beginning through the middle to a defined end? No – the most we can find is that there is an awareness that a decision needs to be made, a development of a way through a plethora of constructs which emerge

from the initial awareness and the focussing down to a decision which translates into action. I recognise that the above description of decision making has tended to concentrate on the complex elements of the social construct and that it is important to be aware of other approaches to the subject within prevailing literature. In order to redress this balance, I turn to the work of Chang (1998) who published a quantitative piece of work relating to the ability to predict unethical behaviour. He seeks to test out two theories relating to decision theory, both of which are scientific in outlook (theory of planned behaviour and theory of reasoned action), quantifying elements within a perceived process to seek to establish a predictor for unethical behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour developed from the theory of reasoned action and brings together within a stated relationship the elements identified as "behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluation", "normative beliefs and motivation to comply" and "control beliefs and perceived facilitation" (Chang, 1998, p1826). He states that "both theories assume that human beings are basically rational and make systematic use of information available to them when making decisions" (Chang, 1998, p1826). In testing the efficacy of the theories, questionnaires were used with university students. He concluded that the theory of planned behaviour would be able to predict unethical behaviour. However, he was only testing theoretical *intentions* to act. This provides us with a good example of how quantitative methods within psychology have failed to "capture" the diversity of the nature of the processes around making decisions of all types. It starts with the presumption that human beings are basically rational and systematic and then fails to overcome the *gap* between stated intention and resultant behaviour.

6. Decision or dilemma?

There is one type of decision which I intend to refer to as a *dilemma.* Indeed, several informants refer to their situation as their "dilemma", for example, Angela says "it was a real dilemma because you don't know what sort of stance to take"; Colin – "So really the dilemma was the decision whether I'd go and do this" and Don "So the dilemma really I suppose was concerned

with what is fair and what is just and there was no easy answer to that question". In most instances, informants were referring to dilemmas within the context of the difficulty of the decision facing them.

Such dilemmas tend to exist where two moral obligations are in conflict or where the outcomes will be equally harmful to others. This is where we commonly refer to the "horns" of the dilemma. Thus, an example would be whether to steal expensive unaffordable drugs to cure one's partner's otherwise terminal illness (Kohlberg, 1981). The two principles of "do not steal" and "one should do everything possible to preserve one's partner's life" conflict in this situation. Another example might be the decision whether to make redundant the most expensive, oldest, longest-serving person in a factory section, in order to preserve the jobs of two younger, less well-paid, members of staff or whether to use the "last in, first out" principle, recognising the value of older employees but setting back the careers of younger individuals with families and mortgages.

The resolution of such dilemmas is usually difficult and unlikely to be predictable. They are always characterised by a balancing of two or more options which work against each other and which offer differing resolutions of a solution, none of which are totally acceptable. As described in the previous chapter, I realised that the arithmetic of the cognitive maps was allowing me to identify particularly difficult decisions, where the decision was finely balanced. I decided to call such situations "dilemmas" and these were identified where a total score of strength of influence equalled between +6 and –6. There were six dilemmas under this definition from Angela, Frederick, Joanne, Leo, Mark and Owen.

The tightest dilemma (Leo's) concerned the welfare of a colleague who was also a social friend thus creating a conflict between values relating to employment and private social life. Leo's case is the one situation where a decision was not actually made in that he was never asked to make it. He worked it all out in anticipation but then was out of the office when his

colleagues were being asked the same question. He was, however, very clear about what he would have done.

Five of the six dilemmas concerned specific issues relating to individuals as against more general organisational issues from which one might conclude that those decisions relating to the welfare of an identifiable individual cause greater difficulty when moral principles conflict. While all sixteen informants presented situations where there was moral conflict, the six "dilemmas" within them expressed particular difficulty in resolution of the problem faced by them.

7. Conclusions

The decisions which informants have brought to this project demonstrate a diverse, ephemeral construct. We tend to conceptualise decision-making as a process having a beginning, middle and end. The reality of the informants shows that very often the process recurs (Bob) or is cyclical (Gaynor, Penny) and can be part of a wider historical situation. I therefore conclude that the social constructionist perspective on this concept takes a wide view and recognises that the word "decision" can be used within a number of different structured or less structured contexts where the resultant meaning can still be shared because we accept the breadth of meaning for this concept, holding within it at various times both an intention to act and the action, or series of actions, itself. It is clear that making a decision involves an element of information, of choice between at least two different options, each of which being possible to achieve, and that often there is an element of debate involved. Further, a decision is usually consciously made and is not made without due consideration. However, that does not mean that it cannot be repeated. It is not a habit while all factors are being taken into account at the point of each decision. At the same time, it has become clear that any attempt to make judgements around the *quality* of a particular decision would be futile and potentially unjust to the decision-maker because of the lack of available information.

This leaves me with a picture of a decision which is not a process, which has elements which feed into it relating to identifying the problem, thinking through the relevant information, considering the balance of the various influences within the situation, and acting accordingly. The nature of what happens before the action is multifarious and diverse, sometimes unpredictable and elusive to capture.

Chapter Six:

Theories of Individual Moral Development

1. Introduction

When considering the process of making a moral decision in the workplace, the central "player" is the individual involved and therefore that is where any investigation of the process must start.

What does an individual bring to any moral decision? She has, firstly, a set of values which are constantly changing and being influenced by a number of "external" factors. Secondly, she has a particular ability to reason through specific options for action with a moral content with reference to that set of values. Lastly, she needs the capacity to resolve a "moral" situation by translating the reasoned decision into action. Within that process, the individual carries a number of factors which are personal to her and which are (in general) fixed and unchangeable – for example, gender, age, level of education, together with aspects of their character such as their locus of control.

The project's research informants all identified sources of influence within their cognitive maps of their situations relating to something which originated from themselves. In most cases, they referred to individual *values* as being the source of the influence. In others, Isabel, for example, talks about her "own emotion" in relation to a number of concepts identified within her map while Leo refers to his "personal view". What is implied by all informants is something which is inherent to themselves and identifiable apart from other influences.

The question of "moral values" and their philosophical context will be considered in Chapter Eight. I want to differentiate here between the "values in use" and the structure in which they are being used. I intend concentrating on the latter in this chapter. Thus, my current aim is to consider how people

acquire such values and the ability to use them rather than the personal philosophy they use in assessing their own (and that of others) value judgements and actions. In doing this, I am making a distinction between *content* and *process*. Content relates to the value judgements and moral reasoning arguments in use. Process reflects the way in which such values are acquired and the ways they are used within the context of reasoning through a particular decision. The question of the nature of the content will be discussed further in Chapter Eight. This chapter is concerned with the nature of the process involved in making a moral decision in the workplace and how an individual develops the ability to reason through a situation which contains a moral element.

Theories which seek to answer the question of where we get our moral values from can be found within the field of psychology and sociology and they invariably relate to or derive from the different paradigms in the relevant disciplines. Within psychology, there are theories relating to moral development from the psychoanalytical and behavioural traditions. However, the most influential theory and that which has directed research in business ethics more than any other, is that known as cognitive moral development, devised by Lawrence Kohlberg following a series of longitudinal studies. It is this theory which I will explore in the greatest depth, referring to other theories where they have been used to usefully criticise Kohlberg's work. I will then consider how the theory of cognitive moral development (CMD) has influenced research work within business ethics, together with a literature survey of work carried out on such factors as age and level of education. I will then apply an analysis of the stages of moral development to the arguments used by the project's informants. The question of how an individual's gender affects their moral thinking will be covered in the following chapter as it raises a number of specific issues within the empirical research.

Finally, in introducing this chapter, it is helpful to consider as background to the work of Kohlberg, two separate theories which preceded him historically – the work of Erich Fromm and Emile Durkheim. Erich Fromm, in his book

Man for Himself: An Enquiry into the Psychology of Ethics describes his theories as deriving from within the Freudian psychoanalytical tradition. Writing in 1949, he stated that

> the sources of norms for ethical conduct are to be found in man's nature itself; that moral norms are based upon man's inherent qualities, and that their violation results in mental and emotional disintegration (Fromm, 1971, p7).

Thus he held that any study of ethics should be a study of the human character as a whole in terms of the "orientation" of that character. He distinguished between authoritarian ethics and humanistic ethics and in relating this to the derivation of the "conscience" he held that the authoritarian conscience reflected the voice of the external authority whether it be that of parents or State. The "humanistic" conscience is defined by Fromm as being "our own voice, present in every human being and independent of external sanctions and rewards" (Fromm, 1971, p158). He therefore argues that people should listen to themselves in making moral judgements. He mentions the question of development through childhood from the authoritarian to the humanistic but questions whether the authoritarian has to pre-exist the humanistic conscience.

While Fromm tends towards a sociological perspective, the work of Emile Durkheim is rooted firmly within the discipline of sociology. While future chapters will be considering in greater depth the societal influence upon individuals' moral decision making, it is important to be aware of his work at this stage in order to set other theories in a proper context. Emile Durkheim saw society as being a power in itself and held that our moral values stem from that power and are generated by society. "But attributing to society this preponderating role in the genesis of our nature is not denying this creation; for society has a creative power which no other observable being can equal" (Bellah, 1973, p222).

In introducing this subject, the two above contrasting theories serve to indicate the range of resolutions of the problem of the derivation of moral values. However, before continuing to consider CMD theory, it is necessary to outline the work of Jean Piaget as this set the scene for Kohlberg's thinking a few years later.

2. Cognitive Moral Development (CMD)

(a) Piaget's theories

In his book *The Moral Judgement of the Child*, Jean Piaget outlines his theories relating to how children gain their moral values (Piaget, 1932). He is quite clear that he is investigating *moral judgement,* rather than moral behaviour. Moral judgement is based on rules and where these rules come from is where theory begins to diverge, whether it be Kantian philosophy or Durkheim's sociological theories. He also makes the distinction between the practice of rules and the *consciousness* of rules.

From an analysis of discussions with children up to the age of 12 regarding the rules of a game of marbles, he draws together data from which he pulls out what he calls "four successive stages" (Piaget, 1932, p16). The first is when a child picks up the marbles on his own and plays with them on his own according to his own wishes. The second he calls *egocentric* because children at this stage, while playing alongside other children, are still playing "on their own" without following any coded rules. The third he calls *cooperation* – each child is trying to win but no-one is quite sure about the rules. The fourth and last stage is what Piaget calls the *codification of rules.* "Not only is every detail of procedure in the game fixed, but the actual code of rules to be observed is known to the whole society" (Piaget, 1932, p17).

He sees the development as a continuum which cannot be divided up into sections. He admits that there is no clear distinction between the stages on a small scale of sample but only through increasing the number of research subjects does a general pattern emerge.

The consciousness of rules develops over three stages that overlap the above stages.

> We may express this by saying that the progression runs through three stages, of which the second begins during the egocentric stage and ends towards the middle of the stage of cooperation (9-10), and of which the third covers the remainder of this co-operating stage and the whole of the stage marked by the codification of rules (Piaget, 1932, pp17-18).

During the first stage, rules are not yet "coercive". In the second stage, they are regarded as "sacred and untouchable". "Finally, during the third stage, a rule is looked upon as a law due to mutual consent, which you must respect if you want to be loyal but which it is permissible to alter on the condition of enlisting general opinion on your side" (Piaget, 1932, p18). Piaget therefore identifies two sets of developmental stages, one relating to the practice of rules and one to the consciousness of rules.

He refers to the difference between the sociological and psychological approach – the Durkheimian approach would state that the respect is for the authority of a group while the psychological theorist would state that it is directed to individuals and is the outcome of relationships between individuals. He argues as follows:

> For the group could not impose itself upon the individual without surrounding itself with a halo of sanctity and without arousing in the individual a feeling of moral obligation. A rule is therefore nothing but the condition for the existence of a social group; and if to the individual conscience rules seem to be charged with obligation, this is because communal life alters the very structure of consciousness by inculcating into it the feeling of respect (Piaget, 1932, p96).

Piaget carries forward his theory of stages of moral development and reflects it within two defined types of morality – a morality of constraint or of

heteronomy and a morality of cooperation or of autonomy. In doing this, he identifies one "moral notion" (Piaget, 1932,p195) which relates to the concept of justice. He thereby sets a foundation which is later to be picked up by Kohlberg when he bases his theory of CMD upon the notion of justice reasoning.

Piaget's work is criticised on a number of counts by Peter Langford (1995). He questions whether the rules of a game of marbles can be compared with *moral* rules. He suggests that the complexities of the rules cannot generalise into more general conventions and, following analysis of Piaget's interviews, questions the way he has used the evidence from them to support his theories. Langford's last comment on Piaget is that he concentrated his research on children under the age of 13, thereby missing the period of adolescence. It will be shown that Kohlberg holds that much development relating to the capacity to reason morally takes place at that stage.

The reason for including a summary of Piaget's theory is to set the background for a more detailed description of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development.

(b) Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development

The first point to make is that Kohlberg wrote prolifically and developed and modified his theory as his research progressed and in the light of criticism. I have therefore concentrated on his later published works, seeing them as reflecting his thinking as far as it developed.

Writing in 1984 in *The Psychology of Moral Development: the nature and validity of moral stages*, Kohlberg acknowledges that in his study of moral development in adolescents he decided to use three assumptions derived from Piaget's work. The first was to use his concept of *justice* as being the central pillar of a child's moral reasoning according to Piaget. The second was to assume that the child was a philosopher, able to construct arguments around

questions of fairness. The third assumption was that development progressed through a number of *stages* which were set in an invariant order.

(c) The stages of moral development

Kohlberg held that people develop through six different stages of structure of moral reasoning as follows: (summarised from Kohlberg (1981)).

Level A: Preconventional Level	Stage 1: The Stage of Punishment and Obedience	Right is literal obedience to rules and authority, avoiding punishment, and not doing physical harm.
	Stage 2: The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange	Right is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange.
Level B: Conventional Level	Stage 3: The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity	The right is playing a good (nice) role, being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow rules and expectations.
	Stage 4: The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance	The right is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of society or the group.
Level C: Postconventional and Principled Level	Stage 5: The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility	The right is upholding the basic rights, values and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group.
	Stage 6: The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles	This stage assumes guidance by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow.

At times, Kohlberg sought to modify the above stages but these modifications have not in general been taken on board by any subsequent writers (for example, see Weber, 1991).

Kohlberg, writing in 1976, refers to Piaget's theories relating to the development of the ability to reason logically and the development through stages of social perception. He recognises that both abilities need to have been acquired before the corresponding stage of moral reasoning can be reached. In other words, it is necessary to have the appropriate ability to reason logically at a principled level before Stage 6 can be reached. However, Kohlberg does recognise that it is possible not to live up to any particular stage of moral development in practice although he holds that a stage of moral development is a good predictor of behaviour commensurate with that stage. He also states that the higher the stage of moral development in moral reasoning, the higher the propensity to behave accordingly. Later in this chapter, I will be considering the "gap" between a reasoned decision to do something and the actual "doing" of it. Kohlberg here is indicating that the gap narrows (to continue the analogy) as an individual increases their ability to reason morally.

I refer to Don Locke who gives a particularly adequate summary of Kohlberg's theory in relation to an individual's defined stages of moral development, quoted as follows:

> 1. The different stages constitute *structural wholes*, which unite a variety of different responses to different moral situations, and reveal quantitative rather than qualitative differences in the mode of response.
> 2. The sequence is *invariant*, always occurring in the same order and with no stages omitted, though individuals do not always develop at the same rate or reach the same final stage.
> 3. The sequence is *culturally universal,* with the same stages occurring in the same order in every society.
> 4. The sequence is *logically necessary,* in that the inner logic of moral concepts is such that the order could not, logically, be other than it is.

5. The sequence represents an increasing *cognitive adequacy,* in that each new stage enables the individual to resolve and reconcile moral claims and conflicts arising at earlier stages.

6. The stages also represent an increasing *moral adequacy* so that progression through the six stages to a final stage of universal moral principles provides an appropriate and justifiable goal for moral education. (Locke, 1994a, p106).

(d) Kohlberg's research method

Kohlberg established his theories initially through a qualitative longitudinal study of 58 American boys ranging in age from 10-16 years old. He then carried out further cross-cultural research in Turkey and Israel. His method was to train interviewers to interview the research subjects around a structure which included the theoretical discussion of particular moral "dilemmas". The most well-known of these cases is called the "Heinz dilemma" and this is reproduced below.

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $400 for the radium and charged $4,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only get together about $2,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So, having tried every legal means, Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. (Kohlberg, 1984, p640)

In the initial study, the boys were interviewed every three years over a twelve year period. Kohlberg outlines the system of scoring of the responses which identified the stage of moral development which each subject had reached (Kohlberg, 1976). He claims that the stages identified are "true" because anyone doing a longitudinal study of children based on the discussion of moral dilemmas would come to the same conclusions. He also claims that they are true because they are not derived from any one particular psychological theory. They are the result of "logical analysis" of data. It could be argued that, here, Kohlberg is taking a "grounded theory" approach from a *tabula rasa* using induction in forming his theory from "raw" data (see Chapter Two for a fuller explanation of grounded theory). Whether this was in fact the case could be the subject of another thesis!

A student of Kohlberg's at Harvard University, James Rest, developed a research method in the Defined Issues Test which is intended to be a more structured and rigorous test of stage of moral development (Rest, 1976). It uses six moral dilemma situations and requires the subject to rank twelve issues in terms of their importance in deciding what ought to be done. The Defined Issues Test (DIT, as it will be referred to later), has been used fairly extensively in research relating to business ethics (for example, Goolsby and Hunt, 1992; Logsdon et al, 1994; Wilson, 1995; Wimalasari et al, 1996). Kohlberg recognises its use in establishing moral maturity while questioning its relevance to formulating theory (Kohlberg,1976).

(e) Kohlberg's philosophy

Kohlberg identifies "moral categories" which he sees as relating to moral philosophy. He describes four possible groups of categories which he calls *moral* orientations.

1. *Normative order:* Orientation to prescribed rules and roles of the social or moral order. The basic considerations in decision making centre on the element of *rules.*

2. *Utility consequences:* Orientation to the good or bad *welfare consequences* of action in the situation for others and/or the self.

3. *Justice or fairness:* Orientation to *relations* of liberty, equality, reciprocity, and contract between persons.

4. *Ideal–self:* Orientation to an image of actor as a *good self,* or as someone with conscience, and to his motives or virtue (relatively independent of approval consequences from others). (Kohlberg, 1976, p40)

Kohlberg identifies various philosophers with the above – for example, Kant with the normative order, John Stuart Mill with the consideration of welfare. He states that he believes that the justice orientation is the most important.

> While all orientations may be used by an individual, we claim that the most essential structure of morality is a justice structure. Moral situations are ones of conflict of perspectives or interest: justice principles are concepts for resolving these conflicts, for giving each his due (Kohlberg, 1976, p40).

As a result of his research in different cultures, Kohlberg adheres to the theory that the stages of moral development also stand regardless of the nature of the society to which the individual belongs. He does acknowledge that he did not locate any persons at Stage 6 outside the US and the problems relating to Stage 6 in general will be addressed when Kohlberg's critics' arguments are given consideration.

(f) Development between moral stages

How does Kohlberg believe that individuals move between stages of moral development? He upholds Piaget's theory that development between stages is brought about through interaction with peers and peer influence but he argues that adult input is also required. His experiments relating to moral education through the implementation of the concept of the "Just Community" in schools reflect his theory more clearly (Kohlberg and Higgins, 1987).

The emphasis of the Just Community is on the rules which the community works out together in order that they are commonly shared and all members feel responsible for them. In referring to the success of the Just Community approach in moral education, Kohlberg and Higgins state that the motivation does not come from teacher advocacy or the recognition of the value of dialogue and mutual respect but from

> students coming to value a community and membership in it. Feeling a sense of *we*, of collective solidarity, of being a group, was necessary for students to care about fair decision making and moral dialogue (Kohlberg and Higgins, 1987, p110).

Kohlberg and Higgins describe Durkheim's theory of moral development as being respect for group authority, together with a feeling of membership of the group. As a result of this, their guidance to teachers relates firstly, to the use of discipline and punishment to instil respect for the rule and, secondly, to encourage a feeling of cohesion within the group. They interpret Durkheim's theory as hanging on the need for a group or community's sense of sharing certain norms. They then compare this with their experiences in the Just Community projects which confirmed this element of Durkheim's theory.

Putting Kohlberg's theory in perspective and developing upon it, James Garbarino and Urie Bronfenbrenner expand on the process which is required for an individual to move between stages of moral development (Garbarino and Bronfenbrenner, 1976). They have their own theory of moral development which relates to three levels. Level 1 is pre-moral (no moral stage). Level 2 would encompass Kohlberg's stages 1 to 4, and Level 3, his stages 5 and 6 where values, principles and ideas rather than social agents have the greatest influence. They consider what causes a child to move from one level to another and assert that any socialisation of a child will move it from Level 1 to 2 in terms of social influences whether they are parental or peer or other authority. The move from Level 2 to Level 3 has to be the result of an element of choice and therefore conflict. The conflict arises from

a clash between two different sets of values stemming from different "authorities". It is only at that stage that a person has to use principles and values in order to choose. Garbarino and Bronfenbrenner see a pluralistic social structure as being capable of generating a move to Level 3. They define pluralistic as

> a setting in which social agents and entities represent somewhat different expectations, sanctions, and rewards for members of the society. These differences generate intergroup conflict which is largely regulated by a set of "ground rules" (such as a constitution) and a common commitment to integrative principles or goals (such as a religious ethic) (Garbarino and Bronfenbrenner, 1976, p75).

They relate this theory to moral development within different nations and show that the higher the pluralism factor (as they define it) in terms of the socio-political system, the higher children scored in a devised moral dilemma test.

Both perspectives, those of Kohlberg and of Garbarino and Bronfenbrenner, give an insight into the answer to the question "how do we gain our values and our ability to reason morally?"

(g) Kohlberg's view of society

We have already seen a little of how Kohlberg believes that individual moral development relates to society through his concept of the "just community". He relates the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages of moral development to stages of membership of society (Kohlberg, 1976). Thus, the pre-conventional response to the question "Why is it wrong to steal?" is "because the police will find you out and punish you". Here there is no concept of membership of society. The conventional response to the question might be "it's a law that says that we mustn't steal. If society didn't have such laws, society would break down." This indicates a total membership and relationship within society. The post-conventional response would be to explain that individuals' rights need protecting. Here is reflected

a standing apart from society and an ability to make a moral evaluation of society's rules and justify them in terms of individuals' rights.

He then argues that the two stages at each level indicate a development in how an individual relates to others and society in particular. Thus, Stage 3 represents an awareness of individual relationships with others while Stage 4 takes the point of view of society as the "system" on a more institutionalised basis. Similarly, Stage 2 shows more recognition of another individual's point of view than does Stage 1. In the post-conventional level, Stage 5 "distinguishes between a moral point of view and a legal point of view, but finds it difficult to define a moral perspective independent of the perspective behind contractual-legal rights" (Kohlberg, 1976, p39). Stage 6, on the other hand, is able to identify universal principles of right and wrong beyond those set by law. Thus Kohlberg's view of the relationship between the individual and society would appear to be one of tension – needing the influence of peers and adults to be able to develop but gaining the ability to stand apart from society at Stage 6 of moral reasoning.

3. Criticisms of Kohlberg's theories of moral development

Over the years, Kohlberg's theories have been criticised from a number of different points of view. The purpose of this section is to summarise the main areas of criticism and place his theories within the context of alternative ideas, together with a comparison with the results from this project's empirical research.

(a) Methodology

The first area of criticism for consideration is that of his general methodology and, more specifically, the nature of the fictional dilemmas used in Kohlberg's structured interview settings. To what extent do they reflect "reality"? Can an individual really identify with them or are they so remote as to become a subject of strictly theoretical reasoning with no link to a recognisable situation in the research subject's life? (see Adler, 1987). For example, the Heinz dilemma is set in Europe – away from any of the

countries or cultures where Kohlberg's research was carried out. Similarly, it is argued that the dilemmas are too simplified and that in "real life" there are more factors which need to be taken into account (Emler, 1983).

The second area around Kohlberg's methodology relates to the influence of the interviewer and the scoring systems used. It has been questioned as to whether there is a problem relating to the consistent interpretation and scoring of responses to moral dilemmas in interviews (Langford, 1995). It has been suggested that some of the responses to the dilemmas have been wrongly scored due to the (unscientific) moral prejudice of the scorers (Locke, 1994b). Again, Nicholas Emler criticises Kohlberg's work in terms of the influence of the interviewer in seeking to secure the "right type" of response from the research subject in discussing the dilemmas (Emler, 1983). He maintains that the interviewer would be tempted to push the subject to respond in terms of his or her *arguments* for his or her response because this was how the scoring system related to the interview. Langford also makes the point that the dilemmas tend to encourage research subjects to become involved in the context of the dilemma and not to look beyond it to a wider context, thereby not being inclined to argue in the abstract. They would tend to become drawn in to the drama posed by the dilemma. Richard Schweder and Nancy Much re-interpret the interviews used in assessing stages of moral development, using a system of discourse analysis which they argue leads to a re-coding of the moral stage (Schweder and Much, 1987).

For the above reasons, I avoided the practice of using hypothetical scenarios, preferring to concentrate on history and "actual" events. Similarly, it was not appropriate to use the Defined Issues Test which imposes a very theoretical structure on an analysis of moral judgement. However, having heard the individuals' stories and collated their maps, it was inevitable that I should try to relate Kohlberg's stages of moral development to the nature of the arguments being used. This proved very easy to do, bearing in mind his guidance. Only in one case was there any doubt and this was clarified by double-checking the cognitive map against the informants' narrative. The informants were thus "labelled" according to K-stage.

(b) Reasoning v action

It is generally recognised that there is a potential "gap" between what an individual might decide to do and what they actually do (Mischel and Mischel, 1976; Straughan, 1983). Some of the criticisms of Kohlberg's dilemmas relate to the fact that they are *theoretical* – that they assume that, if the research subject were in that particular situation, she would act as theoretically determined through reasoning. Thus the "theory of reasoning" would become the "theory in action or use". However, it is clear that this is very often not the case and that there is a "gap" between a theoretical position and the behaviour which follows it in many situations involving a moral dilemma.

Kohlberg considers the relationship between moral cognition and moral behaviour (Kohlberg, 1984). He summarises research prior to the mid-1960's which was consistent in showing inconsistencies. This led to a belief that there were in fact two different systems which did not necessarily relate to each other – moral judgement and moral behaviour. Kohlberg, however, holds that they are unified. He devises a model of the relationship between moral judgement and moral action and identifies a number of non-moral elements required to convert the judgement into action. These include intelligence (for example, the ability to plan action), attention (avoiding distractions), and delay of gratification (e.g. perseverance). He admits that more empirical research is required in this field.

Jonathan Adler is one of many writers to criticise Kohlberg for not establishing a causal link between moral reasoning and moral behaviour (Adler, 1987). Walter Mischel and Harriet N Mischel make the distinction between an individual's *competence* (capacity) to generate social behaviour and the motivational variables for their *performance* in any particular situation (Mischel and Mischel, 1976). They therefore criticise Kohlberg because his system of levels of moral maturity does not allow this distinction to be made. It can only indicate the subject's *preferred* level of reasoning. It could be argued that, by referring to higher principles of moral values, an

individual could be deemed to be indicating thinking at, for example, Stage 6 level, rather than at the level which his behaviour would indicate that he is operating on.

If moral behaviour diverges from the moral reasoning, what sort of factors influence people to behave in a particular way, given their stage of moral reasoning? Thomas Lickona (1976) sought to relate moral behaviour to an individual's cognitive-motivational base. Mischel and Mischel (1976) suggest that an individual's moral behaviour depends on her capacity for self-regulation and control. They conclude that so much information is required about the variables which apply to any one particular individual that it would be extremely difficult to predict the person's behaviour.

> For example, to predict an individual's altruistic behavior accurately one may have to know his age, his sex, the experimenter's sex, the expected consequences of altruism in that situation, the models to whom the subject has been exposed recently, and the subject's immediately prior experience – to list only a few of the many variables which may be relevant (Mischel and Mischel, 1976, p103).

More recently, the question of the consequences of behaviour is also raised by Krebs, Denton and Wark where they report on research studies with university students (Krebs et al, 1997). They begin by questioning whether students do, in fact, argue philosophically about moral dilemmas in their own lives and their research confirms that they do. However, their research has shown that their level of moral reasoning directly relates to their audience. For example, their stage of moral reasoning would be higher if expecting to discuss an issue with a professor of philosophy than with a professor of business administration. Similarly, they question whether Kohlberg is correct in assuming that the type of moral reasoning involved in resolving hypothetical moral dilemmas is the same as that used to solve everyday situations in practice. They demonstrate that people are not "in" any particular stage at any one time in their life but invoke a number of different stages of moral development – where Kohlberg is correct is in saying that

people develop the *capacity* to argue morally at a philosophically higher level but they do not use this capacity to the full most of the time. They list a number of factors which they have found to affect the level of moral judgement. They argue that the causal relationship between moral reasoning and moral behaviour may be reversed in that some of their research has shown that people choose a self-centred action and then justify it with moral reasoning. Some of the factors they identify in the process of moral reasoning include anticipating social consequences to self (the reaction of others) and the consequences to others. "The value people place on the consequences they anticipate may influence their moral decisions, which may influence the forms of moral judgement they invoke to justify them" (Krebs et al, 1997, p140).

Thus, they turn the argument upon its head, suggesting that the consequences of behaviour govern the justification for it. Their research has led them to propose that the theory of evolution serves as a better basis for an explanation of the development of moral judgement. People co-operate and form and uphold the rules of cooperation as a means of survival and propagation. However, it is also in their interest to cheat the system and to compete against those with whom they co-operate for a larger share of resources.

It might be argued that aspects of the informants' stories would support this theory. Bob was employed within a company where he was provided with a company car. He discovered that others within the organisation were making a regular habit of exaggerating their business miles driven for which they, firstly, could claim reimbursement and, secondly, would count towards a total mileage which attracted less income tax. He indicates that he was encouraged by others to carry out the same practice in completing his monthly claim form. His justification for doing this, apart from it being common practice within the company, was that he considered that the British tax system was inherently unfair and that it compensated him for a low salary which he felt should otherwise have been higher. At the same time Bob obviously felt uncomfortable about what he was doing (*it feels immoral*). It does look possible that Bob was looking after himself first and justifying

his actions subsequently, thus supporting the theory of Krebs et al. Is it possible that this only happens when the resultant behaviour is "immoral" in some way? When one considers other informants' stories, there is only one other context in which someone might be deemed to have openly contravened common rules within the context of employment. This is Edith's story. She was working as a manager in the health services and discovered some potentially unethical behaviour in her organisation which she decided to expose by going in to the office at a weekend and faxing a confidential report to someone who would be directly affected by its contents. When one reads her story, there is little justification for her actions in terms of "survival" in the sense of the theory of Krebs et al. Her reasons contain what might be called "moral" justifications, for example, *felt colleagues being betrayed*, *felt loyalty to organisation being betrayed*, *felt people in organisation had right to know about it*. The distinction between Bob's and Edith's stories is to be found in the level of moral development which they displayed. Bob's arguments relate to a pre-conventional stage, K2, while Edith argues at a post-conventional K5 stage, making judgements outside the conventions of the organisation to which she belongs. The theory that the need for survival within its broadest sense dictates moral behaviour would seem only to fit situations where the pre-conventional stages of moral development are being displayed. Whether the empirical research of Krebs et al only worked with informants working at those stages would need further examination to take this further.

(c) Cultural bias

Kohlberg claims that the stages of moral development which he has identified can be found in individuals in all cultures – that there is a universality about them which overcomes cultural or societal influences. However, in practice, he found Stage 5 reasoning to be much more common in the US than in Mexico, Turkey or Taiwan. Kohlberg explained this in terms of the cultures being at a different stage of moral development in themselves. Robin Snell (1996) argues that cultural bias is built into Kohlberg's methods. The fact that Stages 5 and 6 relate back to the individual can be anathema to other

cultures, such as traditional Chinese philosophies which, while recognising the individual's rights, see them in closer relation to the subordination of the individual to society. Similarly, if one examines the concept of American rights of property, these would be very different from those in a culture which believed in the communal holding of all property (Simpson, 1994). This would, in turn, reflect on responses to the Heinz dilemma. By not adapting his research methods to take account of other cultures but using the same material, Kohlberg created a bias towards American culture when working outside the US. This could well explain why he found less evidence of Stage 6 outside the United States.

Lastly, Kohlberg acknowledges the distinction between the *content* of moral reasoning and the *structure* and states that he is particularly concerned with the latter. However, Stage 6, depending as it does on the ability to reason within a context of "justice", impinges on content and therefore imports a cultural bias in its very definition because Rawls' concept of justice as used by Kohlberg tends to relate to particular communities in the world and not others. I consider Rawls' theory of justice in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

I have indicated in an earlier chapter that I regard it as being to the detriment of this research project that I did not attract volunteer informants from any other cultural background than white European. They would have enriched this project and would have tested the research methods. This is an area for future work.

(d) The need for Stage Six?

Kohlberg's concept of the sixth stage of moral development has been criticised widely, using arguments based on research results and on philosophical perspectives. It is clear that, as mentioned previously in this chapter, Kohlberg himself found no-one outside the US arguing at a level as described by Kohlberg as being at Stage 6. A number of writers have suggested that Kohlberg's theories are not weakened if Stage 6 is removed (for example, Gibbs et al, 1992; Puka, 1994a; Locke, 1994b). They hold that there is no philosophical argument for the existence of Stage 6, that it is not

possible for someone to be so removed from society that they can reason and act according to some "independent" form of moral code based on the essence of justice.

Kohlberg faces the criticism that Stage 6 of his stages of moral development need not necessarily be the best or only "highest" moral stage to be working at (Kohlberg, 1994) by acknowledging that it is essentially Kantian in perspective with its emphasis on duty and obligation as defined by principles of respect for persons and justice. He argues that his empirical research indicates that people prefer the highest moral stage that they can comprehend. He takes a philosophical line of argument which indicates that the two main branches of moral philosophy (utilitarianism and Kantianism) can be found in Stages 5 and Stages 6 respectively. This movement from Stages 1 to 6 in ascending order becomes a pattern of development between Stages 1 and 4 with a branching out after Stage 4 to either Stage 5 or Stage 6. Harman and Thomson (1996) argue that, in fact, individuals have many more options around philosophical directions such as moral relativism after Stage 4. From a social constructionist perspective, it is hard to envisage an individual "elevated" from their societal context and able to be so independent and free-thinking as to overcome any influence and work to "universal ethical principles" as envisaged by Kohlberg. Whether or not Kohlberg interprets the Kantian concept of universalisability correctly is a separate debate not for this thesis.

My main argument pertaining to the distinction between Stage 5 and Stage 6 relates to the method of its identification. With all the previous stages, it is fairly easy to ascertain the stage of moral reasoning an individual is using from the content of their argument. There is a similar need to identify the distinctive features of a Stage 6 argument which makes it different from someone arguing at Stage 5. At this point, it becomes difficult to make that distinction. Indeed, it is not easy to make a claim that any argument is guided by universal ethical principles as the counter-argument can be made that the particular principles involved relate to the society to which the individual concerned belongs. For example, if someone says, in a particular situation,

that it is wrong to cause any premeditated physical harm to an uninvited intruder to one's home, is this a Stage 5 argument of adhering to the values and laws of society (for example, the current UK laws) or is it a Stage 6 argument which implies a principle which can and should be applied in all such circumstances within humanity? It is the same stated principle and it would be difficult for any researcher to distinguish which stage of moral development was being used. Thus, in determining a research informant's stage of moral development, it becomes extremely unlikely that any distinction could be made in practice between Stage 5 and Stage 6 because it is very possible that the informant would be saying the same words at both stages. The underlying conception of the individual of their meaning within the words would need to be explored in greater depth as to whether they believed they were adhering to their society's values or principles which should be applied in all similar circumstances throughout humanity. In fact, when analysing the position of the informants in relation to their stage of moral reasoning, I found no evidence of any line of reasoning beyond Stage 5. It might appear that Kohlberg has made a distinction here which is difficult to prove or disprove in practice. However, there is a little more "scene-setting" to put in place before I consider my findings in relation to my empirical research.

(e) The inflexibility of the stages of moral development

John Murphy and Carol Gilligan (1994) seek to address the problem which Kohlberg found in his longitudinal study that a significant proportion of adults regressed in stage of moral development between adolescence and adulthood. They reconstructed Kohlberg's research methods with new subjects and confirmed these results using his methods and scoring systems – of 13 subjects, 3 individuals ended up with a lower score at age 26 than they had at age 19. The general pattern showed that approximately one-third of research subjects' progress, one-third regress and one-third stay the same. This raises the question of whether the problem relates to the scoring methods used. They hypothesize that the problem would be resolved if another form of post-conventional moral reasoning could be defined which has formerly

been scored as regression to a lower stage. They put forward the theory that as subjects move from adolescence to adulthood they take on a degree of responsibility and commitment in their lives. This results in a more relativistic, contextual theme for moral reasoning. They therefore define a further distinction within post-conventional thinking. The first is *postconventional formal* (PCF) which "solves the problem of relativism by constructing a formal logical system that derives solutions to all moral problems from concepts like the social contract or natural rights" (Murphy and Gilligan, 1994, p81). The second, *postconventional contextual* (PCC)

> derives from an understanding of the contextual relativism of moral judgment and the ineluctable uncertainty of moral choice. On that basis, it articulates an ethic of responsibility that focuses on the actual consequences of choice. . . . According to PCC reasoning, the choice of principles for solving moral problems is an example of commitment in relativism, a commitment for which one bears personal responsibility and which allows the possibility of alternate formulations that could be equally or more adequate in a given case (Murphy and Gilligan, 1994, p83).

Again on the question of the inflexibility of stages of moral development, Don Locke criticises Kohlberg's structural unity for failing to take account of the fact that very few of the research subjects responded consistently at any one stage and there was no identifiable transition from one stage to the next (Locke, 1994a). Similarly, he also refers to the problem of the lack of consistency and regression.

Kohlberg acknowledges these criticisms and states that the hard sequential order of the stages can only be found within the "deontic justice domain" (Kohlberg, 1984, p4). Later in this chapter I consider the flexibility of the K-stages within the project's informants and whether the individuals involved are strategic about the level at which they argue.

(f) Alternative approaches to individual moral development

The introduction to this chapter outlined the two contrasting mainstream theoretical paradigms which served to influence Kohlberg in the development of his stages of moral development. They were the psychoanalytical and sociological traditions. It would be wrong to move on from Kohlberg's theories without first considering more modern approaches to his work viewed from both these other perspectives.

James Gilligan (1976) considers moral development within the framework of the tradition of psychoanalysis. He identifies two types of morality – shame ethics and guilt ethics. As an example of shame ethics, he quotes an Indian tribe who are encouraged to promote the self and who fear the shame of failure. Guilt ethics, for example, he identifies as being an integral part of the religious culture of strict Protestant sects such as the Hutterites. He then compares these two types of ethics with Kohlberg's levels of moral development, relating shame ethics to that which depends on external authority and guilt ethics to that which depends on the internal conscience. Further, he argues that the stages reflect a movement from shame ethics at Stage 1 to guilt ethics at Stage 5. As a psychoanalyst in the Freudian tradition, he holds that both shame and guilt ethics are an indication of an immaturity in personality and development, maturity being ways forward of *resolving* situations. Shame and guilt ethics (morality) create their own dilemmas and thus cause their own problems. The analyst's aim, if she were to meet the Heinz of Kohlberg's Heinz dilemma, would not be to enquire whether he should steal the drug or let his wife die, but to consider the nature of the situation and Heinz's relationship to it:

> to enable him to understand himself and his feelings and wishes; to grow beyond the passing of moral value judgements and to make his choices on the basis of an honest acknowledgement of what he wants to do, coupled with a realistic assessment of the price he may have to pay for any given choice (Gilligan, 1976, p156).

Gilligan's theory appears to reflect an egocentricity which is associated with the psychoanalytical approach. As such, and because ethics is about the welfare of others, it does not fit well as a means of establishing principles of ethical action.

On the other side of the spectrum of theories, a number of social psychologists have developed theories relating to how children gain their moral values, based on influences from peers and adults in their lives. An example of this is given by William Damon and Anne Colby (1987) who consider various theories relating to developmental change in children brought about by external social factors and the way these influences work to bring about change in behaviour and beliefs. They prefer a model which relates to shared goals between the child and the adult whereby the adult works towards a system of influencing through reasoning and demonstration. They refer to work which has shown that compliance with rules results from rewards and punishment and that an internalisation of rules derives from reasoning and acceptance. Thus, if the goals are shared, the reasons and "rules" are also taken on board. They argue that this needs to be a flexible process and with the developing person taking an active part in it rather than being passively "affected" by it.

In the light of this theory, they refer to their research which involved a group of children trying to decide how to divide a reward, the children being a mixture of ages from 4 to 10 years old. What they found was that the longer the children were in the group, the more likely they were to opt for equality. Where this was a new concept for the younger children, it was explained to them by their peers who had previously learned the principle. As a result, a majority of children showed an advance in their ability to reason morally as a result of the test. Children who engaged in conflict with their peers were less likely to change than those who accepted each other's opinions in a more positive way. They conclude from this that any goal theory relating to social influences for change must also include peer influence as well as those of the adult/child relationship.

Along similar lines, Justin Aronfreed (1994) considers the socialization process whereby children gain the ability to exhibit altruistic and sympathetic behaviour. He refers to social cues which transmit information about the experience of others and maintains that some of these cues can then act as motivators towards a child's altruistic or sympathetic behaviour. Similarly, the child gains social cues from seeing the effect of an altruistic or sympathetic act upon others.

> In the socialization of sympathetic behavior, for example, dispositions which the child already has begun to acquire – such as giving, sharing, or the expression of affection – may be more selectively channelled into sympathetic action when the child finds that they can be instrumental to the reduction of another person's distress (Aronfreed, 1994, p154).

Mark Tappan (1999) takes a social constructionist perspective in seeking to identify a dialogical perspective to the development of an individual's moral self through the use of narrative and discourse within a social context. This is a natural development from Kohlberg's concept of the "just community" where the influence of being in dialogue with others in the same societal context enables the development of moral reasoning. It provides another support for the link between the individual and membership of community in providing the influences on an individual's moral thought processes.

Kohlberg identifies the two alternative strands of theory as already identified above and states that both theories agree that "moral development is the internalisation of the standards of parents and culture" (Kohlberg, 1984, p2). This is regardless as to whether moral behaviour is learnt through socialization processes or through a guilt element/conscience identified with sources of authority such as parents.

It will be noted from the above that the behavioural psychologist such as Aronfreed will therefore relate theory to *action* rather than ability to reason, whereas the psychoanalyst is more concerned with the *thought process* of the

personality involved. This returns us to the question which no writer seems to have resolved satisfactorily which relates to the relationship between moral reasoning and moral action. The only common agreement on the nature of the causal effect of reasoning on action is that the factors are multitudinous and complex and, almost without exception, extremely difficult to predetermine.

4. The influence of CMD on research in business ethics

Kohlberg's theories relating to cognitive moral development are used fairly frequently in current business ethics research both as a theory in itself to be tested and as one factor of a wider research study. In many cases it has been adapted in some way for use within a business context while still providing the underpinning theory.

In the business arena, CMD theory has been tested by Weber (1991) using the Heinz dilemma and two scenarios placed within a business context. He found that a higher level of moral reasoning was consistently used in relation to the Heinz dilemma. However, it is possible that different "rules of engagement" are used within the business framework (cf Carr) which might tend to have placed a bias upon Weber's research in terms of respondents reacting differently to scenarios placed within a business context.

This appears to be confirmed by Linda Trevino's work in which she refers to work done in looking at the contextual influence on the level of moral reasoning (Trevino, 1992). This has shown that moral reasoning within the business context tends to operate at a lower level than outside that situation. She also cites work done in cultural anthropology which has demonstrated that individuals can assume highly differentiated roles that allow them to accept different values, norms and behaviours in differing contexts, for example home and work.

Both the work of Weber and that of Trevino begins to raise questions of whether an individual is strategic in choosing the level of moral reasoning to apply in any one particular situation. However, in choosing this strategy,

Carpendale and Krebs (1995) argue that a number of different variables work to influence moral reasoning such as (a) the type of problem or dilemma (b) the social context in which the dilemma is set or in which the audience is placed (c) the moral choices people make on the dilemmas and (d) any vested interest in the outcome. They conclude

> Although the Kohlbergian model accounts well for moral judgments to hypothetical dilemmas about imaginary characters, we argue that when individuals make moral judgements with real consequences to themselves and others, factors such as vested interest, desired outcomes, anticipated reactions of audiences, and the types of "accounts" available in the normative structure of social groups to justify alternative courses of action affect the choices people make, and, in turn, these choices constrain and determine the structures of moral reasoning invoked to justify them (Carpendale and Krebs, 1995, p309).

Lastly, Snell (1996) carried out a piece of research working with managers in Hong Kong to establish whether their theories-in-use correlated in any aspect with Kohlberg's stages. He used a qualitative approach, interviewing managers on self-identified dilemmas. From their descriptions, an analysis was done of the value statements to test whether they matched Kohlberg's stages in any way. He concluded that there was enough similarity between an analysis of ethical theory-in-use and Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning for them not to be totally incompatible while recognising certain differences which are enough to suggest that, if analysing theory-in-use, it would not be helpful to use Kohlberg's hypothetical dilemmas. The results also showed that in 27 per cent of the cases, lower stages of moral reasoning were used in action than had been used in theorising about the situation. In 60 per cent of the cases, more than one stage was used in reasoning and in justifying action.

Finally, within the business ethics paradigm, Kohlberg's CMD theories have been used alongside other factors in attempts to illuminate the nature of moral decisions in business (for example, Trevino and Youngblood, 1990; Goolsby

and Hunt, 1992; Wimalasiri et al, 1996; Fisher and Sweeney, 1998; Windsor and Cappel, 1999).

5. Testing CMD in practice

In Chapter Four, I discussed the method of analysing the informants' arguments in terms of their stage of moral development. The following table demonstrates the results of this analysis with the 16 informants.

Stage 1	0
Stage 2	3
Stage 3	3
Stage 4	5
Stage 5	5
Stage 6	0

It is normal not to find a K6. I have previously drawn attention to the challenge within Kohlberg's theory for the possibility for a person at Stage 6 in terms of moral development to exist. I have also highlighted the difficulties inherent in making a distinction in practice between Stage 5 and Stage 6.

Of the five K5's, two were female and three male and of the three K2's, two were male and one female. The two professionals and the director were all K4 or K5.

It has been argued that "business" thinking means K2 arguing – "Right is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange". When one considers the private sector employees within the group of informants, of the four, two are K2 and two K3 which involves being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow rules and expectations. It would be difficult to argue as a result, however, that business for profit means that individuals argue morally at a lower level from this sample of informants.

However, of particular interest are the informants working at K5. These were Angela, Don, Edith, Neil and Owen. The description by Kohlberg of someone working at Stage 5 is as follows:

> The right is upholding the basic rights, values and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group (Kohlberg, 1981).

In only one (Neil) of the K5 informants did the individual decide to follow the organisational influence which might be considered to equate with Kohlberg's notion of the group in the above citation. In this particular instance, the informant was new into a management post and was re-shaping relationships with colleagues as a result.

> What the new job has meant to me is these moral decisions which I am now forced to make and some of them do mean a different relationship between myself and people with whom I had a former relationship at a similar level. (Neil)

In analyzing the nature of the arguments offered by informants working at stage 5, the question arises as to whether these are really stages of development or just different types of argument. Is it possible that we adopt different criteria for arguing with ourselves, depending on the nature of the context? It is helpful to return to Bob at this point who was cheating his employer but feeling uncomfortable about it. Does the fact that he is arguing at K2 stage in this instance imply that he is capable of reasoning morally at a different level but has chosen this level because it is convenient within the context, despite the fact that he feels uncomfortable about it? If I were making decisions about sharing a cake with three other friends, I would try to do so equitably but if I did not manage an exact partition of the cake, would I anguish over who should have the biggest piece? Further, would I concern myself about whether we should be having the cake at all, given the need for food in the Third World? In this instance, I would choose my level of moral

strategy. Is this what these informants are doing? It is difficult to resolve this issue given that most research on Kohlberg's stages of moral development has used a specific test on theoretical dilemmas where it is possible for research informants to choose the same strategy for argument, given the facts of the case. Since I do not have such conformity within my informants' situations, it is impossible to take this argument further but it has served to raise interesting questions in relation to Kohlberg's theories and tends to support the work of Weber (1991), Trevino (1992) and Carpendale and Krebs (1995).

Similarly, the question has arisen as to whether business pulls individuals down to a certain level of moral reasoning by its emphasis on economic gain. Kohlberg refers specifically to moral reasoning in business and holds that work responsibility in itself, where it involves complex moral issues, stimulates the individual to principled thinking (Kohlberg, 1984).

> When the rules of a system or an institution conflict with the welfare or rights of an individual within that system, the person who is in a position of responsibility for solving that conflict must necessarily formulate ideas or principles which recognise the just or fair claims of both in order to resolve the conflict and to act fairly and responsibly (Kohlberg, 1984, p468).

Taking the opposite view, Fraedrich, Thorne and Ferrell (1994) draw attention to the problems of using theories derived from CMD within the business setting. They quote Albert Carr (1993) who suggests that business has its own set of rules and they question whether it is appropriate for theories relating to personal moral development to be used within a context where different rules apply. They also point to the problems of encouraging individuals to develop to a post-conventional level of moral development where they would inherently question organisational rules. They conclude

> More needs to be known about how personal moral processes enter into an individual's organizational ethical decision making, especially since peer relationships and organizational culture have been shown

to be stronger influences in the organizational context (Fraedrich et al, 1994, p835).

Colin's decision to negotiate an illegal compensation from a contracting company was one made within a context where business influences were high on the agenda. He argued the case at Stage 2. It would be difficult to establish whether, in other circumstances (for example, a problem in his family life) he would have presented a different K-stage. The methods used in this project do not enable me to pursue this further.

6. The effect of age on the process of making a moral decision in the workplace.

So far this chapter has concentrated on the reasoning processes and development of values that an individual holds and that he or she brings to a moral decision. There is, however, a number of what might be called "invariable" variables which relate to the individual. These include gender, age, level of education and locus of control. The issues which arise as a result of the consideration of gender are outlined in the following chapter. While acknowledging the possibility of factors such as level of education and locus of control on an individual's ability to reason through a situation at work which contains some element of moral decision, I was not able to explore such factors with the project's informants.

However, the informants' age was canvassed and this is compared with theory emerging from current literature. The question of age as a significant factor within the moral decision making process has not been clarified by research to date in that varying results are being obtained within business ethics literature. Given Kohlberg's theory of moral *development*, it might be expected that older people would be found to argue morally at a higher level than their younger colleagues. However, existing research does not always confirm this. Wilson (1995) shows no significant result relating to the age of research subjects, while Wimalasiri et al (1996) indicate that age affects moral reasoning with older people arguing at a higher level than younger. Deshpande (1997) had a similar result and suggests that not only are people

more aware of the consequences of their action as they grow older but they have more to lose in terms of the security of their position. This reflects the nature of the effect of consequences when making moral choices. Goolsby and Hunt (1992), in finding women more "ethical" found that the women in their study were actually younger than the men.

Where a number of factors are involved, it is always difficult to isolate a particular one and demonstrate that, all other factors being taken into account, this is the case with, in this example, the factor of age and, indeed, I have argued previously that the quantitative research approach of isolating such elements within a human process is counterproductive in terms of failing to take a holistic perspective of the thought processes and subsequent actions which are involved. However, since the dominant paradigm within business ethics currently supports a quantitative approach, the literature which I am reviewing tends to reflect its methodology.

In practice, the group of sixteen informants involved in this research project showed the following age structure.

Age of informants	Number
Under 30	2
Under 45	9
Under 60	5

The oldest informants were not at the lowest K-stage. One of the youngest informants was K5, indicating that K-stages do not necessarily progress or develop with age. Both the youngest and the oldest informants all wanted to do "right for right's sake" and take a deontological approach to their moral argument in the situation. There is no relationship between those informants who identified dilemmas and their age. Thus, within the given sample, no pattern emerged relating to age as compared with K-stages or nature of their decision. From this sample, it appears that an individual's age does not affect their ability to reason within a moral decision.

7. The nature of individual values expressed by informants

In identifying influences within their cognitive maps, informants all coded a significant range of concepts as relating to coming from themselves in some respect. Within the total group of 16 informants, 91 concepts were revealed which related to individual influences. I sub-coded these with the following results.

	per cent
Individual values (right and wrong)	36
Sense of justice (fairness)	32
Self-interest	23
Emotions experienced	9

Only one informant (Gaynor) included examples of all four types but she revealed the highest number of concepts.

Examples of these four types are as follows, analysed in Gaynor's situation (who was being bullied by her line manager) (a total of 13 concepts):

Individual values (right and wrong)	Not a personal vendetta Being seen as weak Determined not to let her get to me Feels disloyal Determined not to be affected by adverse behaviour
Sense of justice (fairness)	Other people being treated same way but not same intensity or regularity Always met deadlines and expectations Line manager exhibiting behaviour of bullying, destructive, intimidating nature over a long period
Self-interest	Needing salary/mortgage to pay Creating a difficult work environment for myself Risk of need to re-locate
Emotions experienced	Felt angry and disappointed Feeling extremely anxious and "inside" depressed

When one considers Gaynor's map, the strength of influences varies between concepts and it would appear that she has been very honest in indicating that elements of self-interest were as strong an influence on her deciding not to

take out a grievance procedure against her manager as other influences such as *determined not to let her get to me*. For the sake of clarity here, Gaynor had identified four different types of influence which I then coded as relating to her own individual values and it is my coding which has "bundled" these concepts together under a single heading with a subsequent re-coding into the sub-headings above of individual values, sense of justice, self-interest and emotions experienced. I will consider the nature of the individual values and sense of justice in a subsequent chapter when the informants' arguments are compared with philosophical theory. In a way, the issues relating to self-interest speak for themselves but they do serve to highlight the way informants, within their cognitive maps, were open about acknowledging such factors as being necessary to be taken into account along with other concepts of varying relative strengths. Finally, the significant role of emotions will also be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Seven.

8. Concluding comments

In conclusion, it is necessary to pull out some common threads that have emerged from the above investigation of issues relating to an individual's development of moral conduct.

Krebs et al (1995) argue that individuals devise strategies depending on a number of situational factors with which to manage difficult moral decisions. They choose the type of moral reasoning which is most suitable for the type of decision with which they are faced. Kohlberg (1984) maintains that a business context pushes individuals into reasoning at a higher stage of moral development while Fraedrich et al (1994) promote the theory that business equates with pre-conventional reasoning (stages 1 and 2). There is no evidence that individual research informants are adopting particular strategies and yet it could be possible. There are two reasons for suggesting this possibility. The first relates to the apparent uniqueness and, at the same time, the equivocality of the content of the decisions. Each thought or construct within the cognitive maps obviously had an inherent value and emotions were considered alongside information pointers and moral judgements. The content almost seems to be driving the strategy and yet there is no absolute

evidence for this process. At the same time, Kohlberg's theory of developing skills of moral reasoning is not reflected within the age structure of the group of informants. The youngest informant is a K5 and older people are working at a lesser level in terms of moral development. These provide a hint that individuals may be strategically choosing their level of argument. Bob, in cheating his employers, expresses reasons for doing so which fit the description of Stage 2. Yet, he has identified this situation as a moral decision which he is content to share with the researcher. It cannot be inferred from this action that he is capable of applying higher levels of moral reasoning within other contexts while, at the same time, it raises the possibility of this being the case.

The fact that no informant was working at Stage 6 comes as no surprise and serves to support the argument that there is little practical and recognisable distinction to be made between Stage 5 and Stage 6. It is suggested that it is not helpful to begin to introduce particular moral theories relating to *content* at this point when what is under consideration is the *process* involved.

When one considers the cognitive maps and the place of individual values alongside influences from other sources, they become one of any number of constructs involved in a decision and their influence is taken on the same basis as constructs from other influences. It will be shown in future chapters how thoughts which stem from the individual involved relate to concepts generated from membership of communities.

Investigation of how we develop our moral reasoning has highlighted the importance of membership of community. Most of the theories studied have agreed that individuals are influenced by the people around them and the nature of the relationship with them. Membership of groups, organisations, professional bodies and society generally were all mentioned by a variety of informants. How the various groups and organisations influence the informants will be explored subsequently in this thesis.

Before I consider the theory and research results relating to the influence of gender in the next chapter, it is useful to consider a reminder that this research is investigating specific decisions which have supported analysis. In many more cases, moral decisions are not so considered, are ad hoc and sometimes not so informed. Justin Aronfreed reflects this when he says the following:

> Common observation as well as introspection can raise some very serious questions about whether any significant amount of moral decision-making enters into the internalized control of conduct for most human beings (despite the fact that various states of moral knowledge may be available to them). Moreover, even when the control of conduct takes place through evaluative cognition, it may more typically rest on representational thought that is not structured in truly moral categories (Aronfreed, 1976, p56).

Chapter Seven:

Gender Issues and the Role of Emotions

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Kohlberg can be questioned in his attachment of justice reasoning to Stage Six in terms of confusing content and process. In this chapter I intend considering how the justice reasoning approach is challenged in a different way through the examination of issues raised by gender. I then consider the role of emotions within moral decisions.

2. The theory of the effect of gender on moral decision-making

In considering Kohlberg's research methods, it is clear that he only researched within the male population. This then raises the question of whether his theory of stages of moral development can also be applied to women. In 1982, Carol Gilligan, a student of Kohlberg, published *In a Different Voice.* This has become a seminal work in this field because it does two things. It challenges the validity of Kohlberg's research in that he only worked with male subjects and it questions the philosophy to which he adhered – the concept of justice as the central core of moral reasoning of an individual.

As a result of her research studies with women, she concludes that women take a different perspective from men when reasoning on any moral issue. She calls this the perspective of "care" and argues that women view moral dilemmas within a context of relationships of care and responsibility.

Writing later, she refers to ambiguous figures such as the image of the vase and the faces (which can be seen as either image) to draw an analogy with the way she describes two different approaches to moral conflict (Gilligan, 1987). She maintains that most people are aware of both perspectives but opt to use one rather than the other. The distinction she makes is between the

justice perspective so embraced by Piaget and Kohlberg and a care perspective of moral thinking. She equates the justice perspective with moral reasoning relating to the rights and duties of individuals. The care perspective originates from her previous research into the moral processes of women and relates to a context of relationships. "Since everyone is vulnerable both to oppression and to abandonment, two moral visions - one of justice and one of care - recur in human experience" (Gilligan, 1987, p20). She says of her earlier work:

> women, especially when speaking about their own experiences of moral conflict and choice, often define moral problems in a way that eludes the categories of moral theory and is at odds with the assumptions that shape psychological thinking about morality and about the self (Gilligan, 1987, p21).

She further defines the difference between the two perspectives in terms of the two questions "what is just?" and "how should I respond?" where the latter shows the emphasis on self reacting to a perception of need. She uses the example of whether to report someone's drinking problem in the context where it should be reported according to organisational rules. The decision not to report is seen, firstly, in the context of "mercy" in the light of suitable contrition by the drinker and a consequent decision not to follow rules (the justice perspective). An alternative view is to decide not to report because this would have a negative influence on their relationship and thereby cut off a possible source of help (the care perspective).

Gilligan sees these two perspectives as shedding a different light on the same situation - two dimensions of the same problem. She carried out a piece of research on 80 educated North American adolescents and adults of both genders which involved the resolution of theoretical moral dilemmas. 69 per cent raised considerations of both justice and care. Two-thirds focused on one set of concerns and of these there was a marked difference between the sexes. With one exception, all the men who focused on a perspective, focused on the justice perspective. The women were divided with

approximately one third focusing on justice and one third on care. Gilligan makes the point that if the females had been eliminated from the study, the care perspective would also have almost disappeared. Because the research subjects were educated, the care perspective could not be explained in terms of the context of the subject, for example, a housewife might have a greater propensity to use the care perspective than, say, a business professional. Both sexes lost sight of the second perspective (care) in reaching a conclusion. She concludes that a moral judgement in itself does not show the *structure* or path which has been used in order to reach the resolution.

Thus, Gilligan seeks to challenge Kohlberg's philosophy of justice upon which he bases his Stage Six of individual moral development. This is supported by Emler when he refers to the apparent inflexibility of the justice approach.

> This interpretation is opposed to ambiguity. It presupposes there are no irreducible conflicts of interest in life, only failures of reason. This is the justice of a cool, dispassionate, detached perspective. It denies the moral legitimacy of an emotional dimension (Emler, 1983, p59).

On a philosophical level, it is helpful to consider the type of moral theory contained in the following statement by Carol Gilligan made in 1982,

> While an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality – that everyone should be treated the same – an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence – that no one should be hurt. In the representation of maturity, both perspectives converge in the realization that just as inequality adversely affects both parties in an unequal relationship, so too violence is destructive for everyone involved (Gilligan, 1982, p174).

It would appear that here, she is reflecting a teleological viewpoint of moral reasoning, viewing the consequence that no-one should be harmed as an end result to be considered above all else. In Chapter Eight, I consider the differing strands of ethical theory in greater detail.

Gilligan and Attanucci define the two orientations of moral reasoning as identified above as follows:

> A justice perspective draws attention to problems of inequality and oppression and holds up an ideal of reciprocity and equal respect. A care perspective draws attention to problems of detachment or abandonment and holds up an ideal of attention and response to need. Two moral injunctions – not to treat others unfairly and not to turn away from someone in need – capture these different concerns. (Gilligan and Attanucci, 1988, p73)

In their study, again, informants were asked to describe a situation of moral conflict in which they had been involved. The study showed that both men and women showed awareness of both orientations but that women tended to present "care focus" dilemmas while men "justice focus". If women had been eliminated from the study, there would have been little evidence of the care focus.

Finally, Gilligan used the same type of structured interview as Kohlberg in her initial research. Thus, her studies are open to the same types of criticism as raised earlier in relation to Kohlberg's research methods. For example, she used theoretical dilemmas to be discussed and resolved within the interview and she followed the same process of interpreting the data provided by the interviews. The latter point is highlighted, in particular, by Langford who suggests that perhaps men and women use discourse and terminology in different ways to express the same idea (Langford, 1995). This has influenced me to steer away from the use of such research methods.

It should be stated at this point that, as a result of Gilligan's work, Kohlberg modified his thinking to assert that the "stages" he defined were only "stages of justice reasoning" (Kohlberg, 1984). However, one criticism stands which relates to both Kohlberg and Gilligan. That is the question of whether it is correct to deny, in the way that they do, the distinction between the *structure* of the process towards moral behaviour and the *content*. I have made this

distinction earlier in Chapter Six and I maintain that both writers fail in the respect that their theories confuse the moral content, for example, principles of justice, principles of care with the process/structure of reasoning within a moral context. If one returns to Kohlberg's stages of moral development, these can be read without recourse to philosophical theory. They describe an individual's growth in ability to argue morally and they stand to be tested as such in terms of the *process* used. Both Kohlberg and Gilligan then fall into a trap of imposing philosophical theory which represents *content* onto the different stages of development with subsequent argument as to how which theory fits which stage the best. If one makes the distinction between content and process, it enables the stages of moral development to stand alone, apart from their philosophical "appendages" and to be tested as psychological tools with a validity or not as such in their own right.

Gilligan's findings have continued to be tested with no serious challenge being made to the validity of her theories (for example, Derry, 1987). More recent is the work of Nona Plessner Lyons who interviewed 36 people (16 females and 14 males) in relation to a moral conflict with which they had been involved (Lyons, 1988). She used a method of analysing data received which related to coding in relation to considerations of response or care and consideration of rights or justice. In her sample, 75 per cent of the females had response predominating and 25 per cent rights predominating with none equal. Of the males, 14 per cent had response predominating and 79 per cent rights predominated with 7 per cent equal. In the females, 37 per cent made no consideration of rights and in the males, 36 per cent made no consideration of response.

3. Research in business ethics on gender issues

Gilligan's theory that women argue morally within a perspective of care has been tested within business ethics research and it has been found that, where the effect of gender is tested as one of many factors in the moral decision making process in the workplace, varying results have emerged. In some

studies, no difference has been shown between males and females – for example, Deshpande (1997), Wimalasiri et al (1996) and Jones and Kavanagh (1996). However, Goolsby and Hunt (1992) showed that women were more ethical than men and argued morally at a higher level, using Rest's DIT. Feleta Wilson (1995) researched a group of nurses, using the DIT and a system of assessing the use of "care" reasoning. The results showed no difference between genders on levels of moral reasoning but a significant increase in the use of "care" reasoning among females.

However, three interesting pieces of research serve to shed more light on the subject. Leslie Dawson (1997) refers to a series of studies on the effect of gender on moral reasoning which had shown a total ambiguity as to whether such an effect existed or not. He summarises the types of theory which might indicate a justification for the inconsistencies in the research. "Self-selection" theory argues that women in business take on different "traits" from those outside. "Structural" theory suggests that women may enter business with different values but that common training and organisational influences will mean that women eventually respond in a similar way to their male counterparts. "Situational" theory suggests that differences between males and females may relate to the context of the situation in which they are involved so that decisions within a setting of problems affecting relationships might be addressed differently to those relating to, for example, human rights. Dawson reports on research where he used 20 dilemma situations relating to sales, some of which he identified as "relational" relating to effects on others and the balance as "non-relational", for example, theft by non-disclosure. The research supported the situational theory because there were key differences in results between males and females on the relational dilemmas with little difference on the non-relational situations. Dawson concludes that his results refute self-selection theory but support "gender socialization theory; namely that women reach ethical judgements with more concern for feelings and relationships and less concern for rules and rights" (Dawson, 1997, p1150).

Smith and Oakley (1997) used 15 different ethical situations which were divided between rule-based issues and social issues (those involving social responsibility or interpersonal relationships). They found no difference in gender in an analysis of the rule-based issues. However, on the social issues, the females scored consistently higher. "Female respondents appear to have higher ethical standards for behaviour that involve larger social issues, sexual exploitation, and the integrity of employee relations" (Smith and Oakley, 1997, p43).

Weeks et al (1999) equated career stage with divisions of age in an investigation of the effects of gender and career stage on ethical development. Their research found that (a) females argued morally at a higher level in most cases than males and (b) people in a later career stage argued morally at a higher level than those at an earlier stage. However, again, the research was based on hypothetical vignettes.

Thus it would appear that, where issues relate to inducing, for example, organisational rules where no relationships are involved (for example, dishonest completion of expense claims), male and female employees would tend to reason along similar lines or argument. However, where moral issues relate to, for example, the welfare of a fellow employee, a female employee will tend to see the issue within the focus of a caring relationship.

4. Results from the empirical research in relation to gender

There were nine males and seven females within the 16 research informants for this project.

Males	9
Females	7

Gilligan's work on the distinction between males using moral arguments relating to justice and females relating to care and being more concerned about the strength and nature of relationships around them was tested here. The content of each decision was analysed between issues relating to justice

and those relating to care. For example, in deciding to publicise a politically sensitive report, Edith identified the following mapping concepts:

Felt people in organisation had right to know about it (Edith)
Felt colleagues being betrayed (Edith).

In addition, in her story, Edith expresses concern for an incoming new manager who does not take up the post as a result of being warned of actions being taken. Thus, Edith is indicating a caring for her colleagues, both current and future which are a part of her motivation for taking the decision that she did. On the other hand, from a masculine perspective, Ken indicates two concepts relating to justice in deciding to report problems with data collected for the information of funders:

Doing the right thing (Ken)
Getting caught out (Ken).

88 per cent (14) of the informants conform to Gilligan's theory. Don and Leo (both male) appear at first analysis not to comply because of the potential caring nature of their decision. However, Don, in seeking to appoint the "best" person, regarded the decision as a good management decision rather than from the point of view of the individual's benefit as he wanted to get the right person in the job. Leo was concerned about a work colleague who was also a friend and he expressed the conflicts around that situation which brought out some caring aspects. I would conclude from the above that Gilligan's theories have largely been confirmed by the evidence of this piece of work. While I considered using Lyons' coding methods in relation to rights and responses, I opted for a more holistic approach to the narrative and map as a "whole", using particular concepts to inform a more general coding.

However, this project's informants demonstrate that females are also capable of expressing concepts in terms of "justice reasoning". A good example of this is Helen who had had problems in her relationship with her boss. Helen was expected to raise a substantial sum of money (equal to if not greater than,

the collections she had recently carried out for others leaving) to buy her boss a leaving present. She felt very uncomfortable about this, given the nature of their relationship and she expresses her decision in terms of lack of caring for her boss. However at the same time, she says

> *Didn't want to try hard for her because she hadn't tried hard for me* (Helen).

Here is an element of justice being expressed in terms of her not feeling it would be fair to be more caring to her female boss than she had been to her.

Similarly, Isabel used a caring perspective in deciding to report a wrong procedure for a vacancy where she was working as a human resources officer in that she felt she had to report the contravention of the equal opportunities procedure to protect not only herself but others who would have liked to have applied for the post. One of her concepts relates to a justice perspective:

> *Unfairness to colleagues* (Isabel).

Thus, it can be shown that female informants were aware of and used justice-reasoning within an overall caring perspective.

One other issue arises from within this group of informants in relation to gender and, more specifically, feminist issues. Gaynor and Helen both expressed problems with their relationship with a female manager in that they both felt abused (using the term in its broadest sense) by her. In my experience, this is not uncommon and raises issues which it is not appropriate for this thesis to explore in relation to female behaviour to other females within a business context.

Finally, comparisons were also made between gender, stages of moral development, the nature and strength of identified influences and philosophical theory perspectives and no relationships were found which raised issues for one gender or the other. We can conclude that, broadly

speaking, this project supports Gilligan's theories in stating that men and women take the different moral perspectives of justice and of care in their general approach to making moral decisions in the workplace.

5. The role of emotions

Our society tends to align the demonstration of emotions with a feminine trait. However, both men and women have feelings and the question arises as to how they allow them to influence their moral decisions. The following section seeks to explore these issues.

We are all familiar with feelings such as anger, sadness, happiness and pride. We also know what we mean by "gut reaction", that feeling that appears to come from nowhere but points us in a certain direction in respect of making judgements or reacting emotionally in any particular situation. It appears to be non-logical, stemming from processes which often cannot be explained or justified. At the same time, we seek to be "rational" within our decision-making processes and this relates to our ability to reason through the pros and cons of a specific problem. There is also an implied requirement when behaving "rationally" to seek a solution which is argued logically without recourse to our feelings. It is at this point that writers over the centuries have sought to set rationality and emotions against each other, seeing them as being at the opposite ends of a scale relating to relative objectivity.

Here I aim to explore existing literature around the role of emotions, firstly, in relation to decision-making in general and then, more specifically, with regard to decisions with a moral factor within them. I then compare this with the way in which this project's informants expressed their emotions within the context of the story they were telling and the way in which they were accounted for. Where the situation aroused strong emotions, how were these dealt with? Were they put on one side as an informant struggled towards a goal of objectivity and perceived rationality or were they incorporated into the fabric of the decision, acknowledged and an allowance made for them?

6. The role of rationality and emotions in decision-making

When we make decisions, we often refer to our "gut reaction" and what it is telling us. The phrase appears to imply an intuition of some sort which may not be based on sound facts or principles but it still has a strong potential influence on decisions. Flam (1993) identifies three different "selves" which provide checks and balances around decision-making. The first is the rational self which aims to take a hard look at costs and benefits behind a particular action. The second is the normative self which is conscious of values and principles applying within the social context of the decision in question. The last is what she calls the "emotional" self and she chooses to concentrate on feelings of fear. She suggests that it is fear which will prevent or influence a decision which might have been otherwise made by the normative self.

The question of whether emotions "intrude" into an otherwise "rational" process of decision-making has been debated over many centuries and it is not my intention here to enter this debate in any great depth. However, it is important to recognise that, historically, a distinction has been made between what might have been considered to be an "objective", balanced, informed process and the influence of emotions which has often been portrayed as negative in effect, causing some distortion of what might otherwise have been a "perfect" decision. More recently, attempts have been made in different ways to bring the two concepts together, recognising that emotions exist and can have a positive effect on decisions and it is those arguments which I seek to promote here while recognising that others have denied that the two concepts are compatible (for example, Sabini and Silver, 1998).

Etzioni (1993) seeks to show that all decisions are made not "rationally" but are influenced by values and emotions. He denies that rationality and the science that promotes it accurately reflect the nature of decision-making and argues that science, in investigating particular aspects of a phenomenon, has failed to consider the nature of the "whole". He describes normative-affective choices as "transcending" rationality. Part of his argument relates to an individual's ability to manipulate all the information required in certain

situations with the result that various strategies are engaged to make the thought processes more manageable (see also Hogarth, 1987). These strategies, Etzioni maintains, are drawn from value and emotional influences. A counter-argument to this would be that both so-called "rational" concepts such as "value for money" and emotional and value driven concepts sit alongside each other. It is often within the decision-maker's capability to assess the relative worthiness of both types of concepts.

I want to draw finally on the work of Shafir et al who maintain that to analyse decisions on the basis of reasons is a more helpful means of illuminating the nature of decision-making.

> There is evidence to suggest that a wide variety of arguments play a role in decision making. We often search for a convincing rationale for the decisions that we make, whether for interpersonal purposes, so that we can explain to others the reasons for our decision, or for intrapersonal motives, so that we may feel confident of having made the "right" choice. Attitudes toward risk and loss can sometimes be rationalised on the basis of common myths or clichés, and choices are sometimes made on the basis of moral or prudential principles that are used to override specific cost-benefit calculations. (Shafir et al, 1997, p91).

Their suggestion that one uses the concept of "reasons" to overcome the question of the relationship between rationality and emotions recognises the complementariness between the two elements and better embraces the ephemeral nature of making a decision. However, when there is a particular moral element to the decision, the situation becomes more complicated. Philosophers have debated over the centuries whether moral judgements are emotive or rational and the next section of this chapter summarises the nature of their arguments.

7. The role of emotions and reason within a moral decision

When we are considering a particular moral question, do we only use our reason? Do we also listen to our emotions and take them into account? How emotive are moral arguments? If I were to say that I "felt" that a particular action would be wrong, would I be referring to emotions engendered by the thought of carrying out that action or would I be using a process of *intuition* to conclude that a particular way forward would be immoral in the given circumstances? Do we make a distinction between "objective" reasoning (rationality) and the influence of our emotions? Are the processes in moral argument rational in the sense that I have previously described or do they defy the definition of rationality to such an extent that their conclusions must be confined to being classified as a form of emotional debate. These are the issues which philosophers have raised in relation to rationalism and emotivism and which I intend to examine at this point. The work of David Hume is compared with that of Immanuel Kant before a brief reference to theories relating to the nature of moral *language* illustrated by the writing of C L Stevenson and R M Hare. Attempts to move away from the dualism of emotivism and rationalism are found in the work of Bauman and ten Bos and Willmott.

David Hume (1751) argued that if someone considers a murder, for example, the feelings which are aroused relate to abhorrence and disgust. To say that the murder is "bad" is not a factual statement and therefore not within the realm of reasoning but the feelings of approbation draw one to conclude that murder is a vice not a virtue. Thus morality is *sensed* rather than reasoned. He maintains that, in order to behave in an ethical manner, an individual should develop those personal qualities or virtues which make him or her personable. A key concept of Hume's work is that of "sympathy", not used in the narrow terms of 'compassion' or 'pity' but, rather, meaning a capacity to be moved by the suffering and happiness of others. Hume insists that this is a human capacity which exists in its own right. The fact that we feel this sympathy to others explains why we judge how we do.

For Hume, moral approval and disapproval arise from sentiment rather than from reason. Hume makes a sharp division between emotions and feelings on the one hand and reason (including thought and understanding) on the other. Thus moral assertions are not statements of fact. Reason plays a part in assessing moral actions, in making judgements about different consequences. Reason, however, is not a motivation for action. Rather, moral judgements, as feelings or emotions, are the sole motivation towards action.

At the same time as Hume, Immanuel Kant was taking the opposing view in maintaining that statements relating to moral judgements were made from a rational objective point of view and justifying them through the use of the categorical imperative - "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 1959, p39). Kant identified three elements to the concept of morality. The first was that to have *moral worth* an action must be done from a perspective of duty. The second related to the need to act purely from duty and not for any other specific purpose. The third described duty as being a necessary element within respect for the law. Thus, there is no room for emotion within Kantian moral philosophy.

The controversy generated between those who believe that moral sentiments are felt and those who maintain that moral decisions are rationally thought out is reflected in a debate about the language of ethics which has given rise to various ethical theories in itself, two examples of which are found within the works of C L Stevenson and R M Hare.

C L Stevenson argues that when a man is talking about the conflicts aroused within an ethical decision, he is in fact using emotive language (Stevenson, 1963). He is not only describing his attitudes but, because he is living through them, he is *expressing* his attitudes and therefore his conflicts. Because these attitudes are expressed rather than described, Stevenson argues that they are emotive. He distinguishes between *descriptive* and *emotive*

meaning. Emotive meaning has two components – it has a tendency to express the speaker's emotions and, secondly, it tends to induce similar feelings in others. "Drunken driving costs lives" is descriptive and can be proved or disproved. "Drunken driving is wrong" is not a statement of fact and therefore cannot be true or false but its function is emotive.

R M Hare (1981) accepts that there are moral intuitions concerning the language that people use to express morality and he asserts that there is a logic within it. He denies that he is attempting to break Hume's law (no "ought" from "is") and argues that we use a certain peculiar type of logic when we talk about moral principles which relates particularly to them. Moral judgements are essentially "action-guiding" and are therefore a form of imperative. However, the main difference between moral judgements and other types of imperatives is that the former are *universal* in nature. According to Hare, the role of reason is to deduce more specific moral judgements from more general statements. Hare draws the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive language. Moral judgements are prescriptive. No moral judgement can be deduced from descriptive statements. Thus, he agrees with Hume's "you can't derive an "ought" from an "is"".

More recently, in consideration of the dualism of rationality and emotions, Bauman maintains that moral phenomena are inherently "non-rational" (Bauman, 1993, p11) and that morality is bound up with irresolvable conflict ("aporetic") while not being universalisable or "irrational" (p13). He argues that the principle of universalisability is a concept invented by philosophers with little relation to reality and that morality is endemically and irredeemably *non-rational* - in the sense of not being calculable, hence not being presentable as following impersonal rules, hence not being describable as following rules that are in principle universalisable.

> As a moral person, I am alone, though as a social person I am always *with* others; just as I am free though entrapped in the dense web of prescriptions and prohibitions (Bauman, 1993, p60).

In a recent article, ten Bos and Willmott (2001) argue that the dualism between rationalism and emotivism is not helpful in seeking to reflect the reality of human processes. Rather, they acknowledge that both have a part to play in the moral situation. They maintain that most of contemporary business ethics theory places reason above emotion in a hierarchical way, deriving from Kant. In terms of respect for individuals, it is respect for an individual decontextualised and seen as an objective which removes or demotes any notion of emotion.

In conclusion, in summarising the arguments around whether moral judgements are made in an objective *rational* way or, rather, are subject to some kind of particular or peculiar logic which relates to emotions or intuitions, ten Bos and Willmott take a more holistic approach to the processes and influences involved, wanting to generate a perspective on moral thinking which relates to the total context of the process with an emphasis on the individual within a societal and historical setting.

8. The informants' use of emotions

In analysing the content of the cognitive maps, of the total number of concepts relating to emotions (29), 69 per cent were raised by women (20) and 31 per cent by men (nine) (total sample 44 per cent women and 56 per cent men). Five of seven female informants raised concepts relating to emotions. Six of nine males referred to emotive concepts and the number of concepts relating to emotions formed 15 per cent of the total number of concepts.

Only one of the concepts relating to emotions is positive (*felt doing the right thing* (Isabel)), the rest being negative (for example, *angry* (Isabel), *frustrated* (Angela)). The question has been raised as to whether negative feelings have an adverse effect on an individual's ability to make decisions (Isen, 1997). I have already described the potential difficulties around making judgements in relation to the quality of decisions. However, it is

clear that individuals found, certainly, the dilemmas and, also, other decisions difficult to make and the presence of negative feelings would have made them all the more hard. Three of the concepts relating to emotions refer to fear:

Fear of being "caught out" (Don)
Fear of lack of support from other colleagues (Gaynor)
Fear of being seen to be involved (Leo).

Interestingly, while one might have assumed that the harder dilemmas would have contained more emotive concepts, this is not shown to be the case in this sample. Angela is unusual in having a third of her concepts relating to emotional content (for example, *don't like employee*, *frustrated*, *worried about appearing unreasonable*, etc).

However, when we consider the relationship of the emotive concepts within the cognitive maps to other concepts no pattern emerges in relation to whether they are a particularly strong influence or not. In the main, they tend to have been coded as coming from an individual's own value system with the exception of those expressing fear which emanate either from the perceived influence of the organisation involved or from peer pressure. The strength of influence that emotive concepts exert varies from individual to individual. What is common amongst all eleven informants who express such constructs is that they are obviously considered alongside concepts which inform or are an expression of another influence on an *equal* basis. They are not offered as an afterthought or with an apology. They are an essential part of the decision being explored and their contribution is taken on board by the informant along with the other constructs being included. They are accepted as worthy of consideration *per se.*

In examining the informants' narratives, I have searched for described emotions or feelings but found none of sufficient significance to be able to draw out any generalisations. I can only conclude that, at the early stages of the interview when they were asked to describe the situation they were going

to talk about, they did not feel it appropriate to refer to feelings, either because they were not sufficiently comfortable with me at that stage of the interview or because, in telling the story, they were seeking to be as *clinically objective* as possible, deliberately omitting any reference to emotive issues as much as possible.

9. Conclusions

This chapter first addressed issues relating to the effect of gender on the making of moral decisions. It was concluded that the empirical research upheld Gilligan's theories relating to the differing female and male perspectives of care and of justice. On the question of the role of emotions within the context of a moral decision, eleven informants referred to emotive constructs within the moral decisions in the workplace that they described. They accepted them as having a value of their own alongside informative and reasoning concepts. This tends to confirm the view of ten Bos and Willmott (2001) outlined earlier when they seek to justify a holistic balance between rationality and emotions within moral judgements. So far as theory around decision-making is concerned, if one might refer to all the concepts in any one cognitive map as "reasons", then the theoretical approach of Shafir et al (1997) is confirmed. They seek to move away from the dualism of rationality and emotions by proposing that a wide range of considerations within a decision can be referred to as reasons.

In practice, emotions are included and counted as having a validity as great as other concepts within the decision-making process. They are generated from a range of influences, depending on their nature. There is one other perspective on emotions which has yet to be mentioned. In Chapter Nine I will consider the specific influence of being an employee within an organisation. An element of that can be found in the promotion of certain emotions within the member of staff for the benefit of the organisation and the control of others. The issues which arise as a result will be considered at that point.

Chapter Eight:

The influence of virtues

1. Introduction

Up to this point, the focus of this thesis has been concerned with the *process* of making a moral decision in the workplace. It is now timely, before moving away from the individual and the influences that she brings to bear to a situation, to examine the *content* of the arguments as presented by the project's informants. This is necessary in order to reflect on how the stories that they brought and their moral evaluation of what happened actually relate to philosophical theory and the way that the latter has sought to describe the principles of moral reasoning in searching for the *best* results for those affected and involved. When we make such decisions, what principles are we working to, if any? What are we striving for when we look to make an ethical decision?

The aim of this chapter is to seek to establish how closely philosophical theory reflects the practices of those making moral decisions in the workplace. Its content has been determined by listening to 16 informants and has been steered by their language and their thought processes. During the interview, I asked a question relating to the ethical theory perspective taken in the context of the decision. However, within the decisions, there are a number of other elements which relate to ethical theory. The analysis of individual values in Chapter Six revealed a near balance between the need to do the "right" thing and the need for "justice" to be done (36 per cent and 32 per cent of the total individual values expressed respectively). At the same time, all informants with the exception of one (Frederick) mentioned some form of virtue and the need to be virtuous in some respect. An earlier exploration of Kohlberg's theories of cognitive moral development in this thesis has referred to the influence of John Rawls' theory of justice. In Chapter Seven, I have referred to the analysis of gender-orientated

perspectives between justice and care and these are picked up within the context of philosophical theory.

What is the role of philosophy in an investigation of how individuals make moral judgements within their working environment? Philosophers over the centuries have attempted to devise a framework for an explanation of what is right and wrong, who is a good person and who bad and how that might be judged. They have reflected on their perceptions of the world around them and sought an explanation of the processes we go through in making moral judgements and assessing the ethicality of others. It is not within the scope of this research project to outline the numerous theories relating to the above issues. However, it is important, given a broad awareness of philosophical theory, to consider particular links between what the informants have told us about how they approached making a decision in any one particular moral situation and the range of theories developed by moral philosophers.

M S Singer (2000) has recently carried out a similar project in terms of relating philosophical theory to practical decision-making. She identifies two strands of academic thought relating to ethical theory. The first is that of philosophical tradition which has sought to *prescribe* behaviour through a process of what she terms "reflective deliberations" (Singer, 2000, p187). The second is research within the paradigm of psychology which seeks to *describe* "typical" moral behaviour. She portrays these two strands of research as running alongside each other until recently when writers have begun to recognise that a scientific "objective" approach cannot be entirely "value-free" with a resultant questioning of the division between value and fact. Indeed, there may be extremely "fuzzy" edges between the two concepts. She sets out to discover through empirical research how normative ethical theory and descriptive psychology might relate to each other by seeking to discover the distinctions between individuals' views of behaviour in the workplace which "ought" to happen against their perceptions of what "is" seen to be the nature of the behaviour involved. With regard to ethical theory, she tries to establish which of five rules people use in practice in

deciding on a particular action which might be considered to be ethical. They are utility, rights, justice, principlism and care.

Using devised scenarios and a mixture of repertory grid technique and statistical procedures, results are drawn out which indicate that philosophical normative theories are reflected in people's opinions about what *ought* to happen at work in terms of moral behaviour. The most important principle to emerge was that of justice in treating people equally at work, closely followed by the norm of rights, particularly in terms of respect for others. She argues that, while it might be maintained that justice is a concept which can be absorbed into other ethical theories, particularly deontological theories relating to rights, on a daily basis, people refer to the need to treat people fairly and for justice to be seen to be done. Singer's work is significant for this project carrying, as it does, a number of similarities of approach. She aims to compare philosophical theory with what happens in practice when someone makes a moral decision. However, her methods are different, depending as they do on ethical assessments of fictional situations and then analysing the results using statistical procedures.

Informants have also used evaluative language to describe the type of attitude or motivation within either themselves or others which they judged to be "good" and this relates very much to the Aristotelian concept of virtues. Lastly, many informants were concerned that they should treat others "fairly" and that they themselves should receive the same treatment, expressing grievance if they felt this was not the case in their situation. This introduced the concept of justice and, as a result, I have included a section on the writing of John Rawls within the framework of deontological theories.

Thus, while this chapter could have consisted of a summary of ethical theory from Plato onwards, I have chosen to concentrate on particular themes within the theory which relate to the intrinsic nature of the moral decision itself. Links are then made between what one might term "mainstream" philosophical tradition and the contribution of the emerging paradigm of "business ethics".

2. The deontological/teleological debate

Literature within the business ethics field has tended to see philosophical theory as relating to the normative ethics of the teleological or deontological traditions. The purpose of this next section is to outline two ethical theories which have emerged as having significance within the moral decision making processes of this project's informants, one with a theoretical deontological perspective and the other a teleological focus. They are the theory of justice as proposed by John Rawls and virtue ethics which originated with Aristotle and which has developed further in the 20th century. First it is necessary to define what is meant by the deontological and teleological ethical perspectives referred to above. A deontological theory assumes that a particular moral judgement or statement is right or wrong *in itself.* The term derives from the Greek *dei* which translates as "I must". Thus a deontological philosopher would argue that it is instrinsically wrong to lie to someone and it is intrinsically right to do one's duty (part of the Kantian principles of universalisability and the moral imperative). In contrast, a teleological theory such as utilitarianism and Aristotelian ethical theory proposes that an action should be judged by its *consequences.* Again, there is a Greek derivation from *telos,* meaning "purpose". In the case of utilitarianism, such end results relate to achieving the good of the most people and, for Aristotle, the achievement of *eudaimonia* or well-being in the individual performing the action (a more detailed definition of eudaimonia follows later in this chapter). Very often, these two perspectives have been defined as consequentialist and non-consequentialist, that is, deontology being the opposite of teleology. However, the construct of deontology is wider than that in terms of containing both the right and the good whereas the right is the pursuance of good within a teleological framework.

(a) The theory of justice

John Rawls sees justice within the context of society and social justice. He conceives it as being the fundamental underlying principle against which

people work in co-operation and conflict (Rawls, 1972). He uses as an analogy a mythical situation where people are coming together in a society for the first time as equals. They have to decide how they are going to regulate their society. He argues that the principle of "justice as fairness" ensures in this situation that further institutions such as constitutions and legislature can all be chosen based on the principle of justice. From this point he argues that it is unlikely that such individuals, seeing each other as equals, will choose the principle of utility whereby some will suffer for the good of others. He therefore maintains that two different principles will be chosen. The first relates to equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties and the second holds that inequalities of, for example, wealth and authority, could only be just if they resulted in "compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society".

Inherent in Rawls' theory is the concept of the "veil of ignorance" in that starting from base point as Rawls would have us do, assuming equality between all, he suggests that the parties should not know their social status, wealth, intelligence or anything else about them which might affect their right to equality before they decide upon a moral principle upon which to rely. "The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances" (Rawls, 1972, p12).

Rawls defines the principles of justice as "those which rational persons concerned to advance their interests would consent to as equals when none are known to be advantaged or disadvantaged by social and natural contingencies" (p19). He sees these principles as being by necessity ranked in order of significance when deciding priority of principle. Thus, he offers a theory of distributive justice which has influenced Lawrence Kohlberg in his psychological theories relating to individual moral development and, also, can be seen as the founding theory behind principles of equal opportunities as they have developed within the workplace.

Secondly, there is a tradition within moral philosophy which stretches back to Aristotle and which is now gaining favour within current moral philosophical writing (MacIntyre, 1985; Hursthouse, 1999). It is known as virtue ethics and it has been perceived as reflecting the teleological perspective (Legge, 1998).

(b) Aristotelian virtue theory and its modern developments

> With regard to the virtues *in general* we have stated their genus in outline, viz. that they are means and that they are states of character, and that they tend, and by their own nature, to the doing of the acts by which they are produced, and that they are in our power and voluntary, and act as the right rule prescribes. (Aristotle, 1987, p63, original emphasis)

Thus Aristotle defines virtues and he identifies a number of virtues which he outlines in detail. These include courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence and virtues concerned with honour, anger and of social intercourse. As Norman (1983) and Hursthouse (1999) point out, there are three stages to Aristotle's ethical argument. First, the ultimate end of human action is happiness; second, happiness consists in acting in accordance with reason; and, lastly, acting according to reason is the distinguishing feature of all the traditional virtues.

There are two Aristotelian constructs which require definition at this point. They are *eudaimonia* and *phronesis*. Thus, the reference to happiness in the previous paragraph relates to "eudaimonia" which can also be translated as meaning "well-being" or a type of happiness which relates to the concept of "flourishing" (Hursthouse, 1999).

Alistair MacIntyre offers the following definition.

> It is the state of being well and doing well in being well, of a man's being well-favoured himself and in relation to the divine (MacIntyre, 1985, p148).

According to MacIntyre, Aristotle links the ability to act virtuously with a level of education. Tied up with this concept is that of "phronesis" which MacIntyre describes as being an ability to exercise judgement. He perceives phronesis as an intellectual virtue in itself within Aristotle's writing. As such, it is the foundation of being able to act virtuously. This definition can be extended to include phronesis as a type of moral knowledge which is gained by being part of a "morally civilised community" (Norman, 1983, p54). An example of this is the expression of anger which might be used either appropriately or inappropriately according to the requirements of that community. In considering the significance of membership of community on moral behaviour, it will be useful to recall that, as early as Aristotle, it was recognised that the constraints imposed by membership of any group guide behaviour and dictate appropriate and inappropriate actions. The concept of phronesis also recalls Kohlberg's search for moral knowledge and the learnt ability to make moral judgements. As Kohlberg seeks to identify the process of the psychological development of the ability to engage in moral reasoning, it is that very capacity which is captured by the construct of phronesis.

Alistair MacIntyre's *After Virtue: a study in moral theory* seeks to take Aristotelian ethics and re-interpret them in the light of more recent moral tradition, redefining what has come to be known as virtue ethics (MacIntyre, 1985). He describes his concept of virtues as follows:

> The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which will also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and which will

> furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good. (MacIntyre, 1985, p219).

MacIntyre uses the term *practice* in a very specific way. Whereas the concept of a Kuhnian paradigm relates to a whole culture, history, theory and practice within a particular academic discipline, MacIntyre defines "practice" in terms of a similarly holistic concept of a type of construct relating to a particular activity. Examples he gives include the games of chess and cricket as well as architecture. However, the practice is not in the playing of cricket but in being a competent cricket player and knowing and following its rules and customs.

> By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p187).

The goods internal to the practice of cricket would include obeying the rules, practising skills regularly and being sportsmanlike. These, then, are the virtues of being a good cricketer to which any cricketer should aspire. Inherent in this concept is the Homeric concept of virtues relating to roles in society and MacIntyre acknowledges that his concept of practices is designed to include linking virtues to identified roles.

MacIntyre places the individual within a historical and societal context within membership of a community while making the point that any individual does not need to be *limited* by membership of such. In doing so, MacIntyre refers to the narratives which exist both as fictions promoting values and to individual life narratives which also embrace virtues. In the former, therefore, he refers to the virtues expressed in Homer's Iliad and within Jane Austen's writing while also recognising the need for individuals to relate to a

life narrative of their own which makes sense and which includes virtues that enable that individual to evaluate their own life. It has already been established within this project that the narrative is an important way of making sense of moral actions and their evaluation.

Rosalind Hursthouse (1999) provides a recent analysis of virtue ethics. She portrays virtue ethics as not only relating to the qualities of the moral agent but also directing actions. For example, being honest should mean "Do what is honest". Against the criticism that there is no guidance on what is honest, she points to the practice of seeking advice from a more virtuous person. Within virtue ethics, she defines "right action" as follows: "An action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would, characteristically, do in the circumstances" (Hursthouse, 1999, p49). She moves on to consider the ethical dilemma in the light of this. It is possible to have two alternative actions possible within a dilemma, both of which are not virtuous *per se* but, perhaps, one is less bad than the other. Similarly, two different people can be faced with the same dilemma and have two options, each choose differently and still have done the "good (well)" thing. Here she makes the distinction between what "a" virtuous agent might do rather than what "the" virtuous agent might do. Thus it is possible for two agents in identical circumstances to act differently and still be virtuous. Given an example of an "irresolvable" dilemma, it is possible not just to say that either option might be permissible but also that, in some circumstances, the agents acted "well" in terms of courage, honesty, justice etc. In relation to such dilemmas where any action might be deemed to be less than virtuous because of the circumstances, she states the following:

> The actions a virtuous agent is forced to in tragic dilemmas fail to be good actions because the doing of them, no matter how unwillingly or involuntarily, mars or ruins a good life. So to say that there are some dilemmas from which even a virtuous agent cannot emerge having acted well is just to say that there are some from which even a virtuous agent cannot emerge with her life unmarred – not in virtue of wrongdoing (for *ex hypothesi*, in making a forced choice, the agent is

> blameless), and not in virtue of having done what is right or justifiable or permissible (which would sound very odd), but simply in virtue of the fact that her life presented her with *this* choice, and was thereby marred, or perhaps even ruined. (Hursthouse, 1999, pp74-5, original emphasis)

There is a danger of circularity of argument here in the potential statement "being virtuous is doing what a virtuous agent would do". Hursthouse here would appear to be taking the Homeric influence in terms of linking virtues to roles rather than considering the nature of the "practice" involved as previously defined by MacIntyre. Thus the judgement of what a virtuous agent *should* do must be linked to what is required to promote the benefit of the context within which she is working. An example from the business world would be the practice of being a managing director within a small manufacturing company. Virtues associated with this practice might relate to justice, courage, honesty, openness, and determination. At the same time, she would be expected to be able to compromise within negotiations being undertaken on behalf of the business. Comparing this with another role within the business, that of quality control inspector, the virtues necessary to promote good quality control would include the ability not to compromise on the quality of the goods inspected. Thus virtues have a dependency on the practice within which the virtuous agent is working and are different according to the nature of the practice.

In the previous chapter, consideration was given to the role of emotions within a moral decision. Hursthouse considers their role both within ethical theory and within virtue ethics. She refers to Aristotle's distinction between the "continent" character who is self-controlled but who, within a moral act, acts according to what she knows she should do but contrary to what she would like to do and the fully virtuous character whose desires are in complete harmony with her actions. Aristotle holds the latter to be morally superior to the former. Her interpretation of Kant might hold that he reversed this principle in suggesting that the harder it is to do take the appropriate action, the more virtuous a person is. She concludes that the nature of the

emotions involved indicates which is the more virtuous where the fully virtuous character is "better disposed in relation to their emotions than the self-controlled" (p107).

Two main problems remain with virtue ethics. The first is that there is no guidance as to which virtue is the more "important". In the face of a moral dilemma, it could be possible for two potential actions to oppose each other, both virtuous, but underpinned by different virtues. An example of this would be the question of whether to inform the requisite authorities of a minor crime against an employer such as occurred within the context of an informant's narrative for this project. Is it virtuous to uphold the law by informing them or is it more virtuous to keep one's promise of privacy and confidentiality relating to the identity of the informant? MacIntyre would argue that the best action would sustain the goods internal to the practice involved. This would mean evaluating the nature of the practice (researcher/informant relationship) in terms of the researcher's role in working with informants and the virtues which would promote that work.

The second issue relates to the motivation for being virtuous. Why should a virtuous agent be virtuous? Norman phrases it succinctly:

> If there is no guarantee that *I* shall be any better off for doing so, if all I can be sure of is that it will contribute to human betterment in general, why should I be virtuous? (Norman, 1983, p233).

However, both Aristotle and MacIntyre address this in terms of Aristotle's search for *eudaimonia* and MacIntyre's modern interpretation of this through a person's achievement of a state of well-being. He defines the "good" life as follows.

> The good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is. (p219).

Virtue ethics thus takes on a teleological perspective in terms of the promotion of the "good" which, for MacIntyre, lies within the historical and societal context of the relevant "practice".

3. The influence of philosophical theory on business ethics

Before considering the evidence given to the project by its informants, it is necessary to examine the work which has been done within the field of business ethics in researching how philosophical theory relates in practice to processes within individuals in organisations. Ferrell and Gresham (1985), for example, argue that philosophical theory itself is an influence on individuals and that the more that people are aware of such theory, the more influence it will have on an individual's moral decision. Interestingly, they see the role of theory as being an influence rather than an explanation of the process itself.

Hunt and Vitell (1986) refer to the deontological and teleological theories as reflecting two alternative means of working through an ethical dilemma. However, they assert that, depending on the individual, both streams will be used to evaluate information relating to the decision to a greater or lesser degree. Akaah (1996), writing on the influence of organisational rank and role on marketing professionals' ethical judgements, relates philosophical theory to specific roles within organisations.

> For example, organisational members are believed to rely on teleological moral philosophies in ethical decision making if their roles/jobs demand evaluation on the basis of attained results (e.g. monetary gains/losses). On the other hand, members are believed to rely on deontological moral philosophies if their jobs demand evaluation on how well they abide by rules. (Akaah, 1996, p606).

Menguc (1998) attempts to ascertain whether teleological or deontological considerations dominate within the ethical judgements of sales managers. He concludes that Turkish sales managers rely primarily on deontological evaluations of subordinates' actions and behaviour but that teleological evaluations also play a part. Sligo and Stirton (1998) use a case study to research the effect of hindsight on ethical decisions in the workplace. While concluding that hindsight does present a bias, they then reflect on the influence of normative ethical theories on their research subjects and conclude that there was little relation between the decisions taken and theories relating to rights, justice and utilitarianism. Finally, one of the elements in the integrated model for ethical decisions developed by Malhotra and Miller (1998) relates to "ethical judgement". They list six different philosophical theories to which an individual might refer: ethical relativism, justice, objectivism (defined as a theory which recognises that the world is not perfect but that action can be taken to improve it by the use of guidelines for ethical behaviour, for example, codes of practice), teleology, deontology, and what they refer to as "hybrid" perspectives. They acknowledge that the different theories might bring conflicting results and that an individual might choose to discard one in favour of another but they give little guidance on this.

> Ultimately, for a decision to be evaluated as ethical it must be consistent with all the philosophies judged to be applicable by the decision maker, or there must be overriding reasons which eliminate any inconsistencies between philosophies by excluding those philosophies from the judgement process as not being relevant to the given ethical dilemma. (Malhotra and Miller, 1998, p275).

While the above might be seen to be a very quick run through existing literature around philosophical theory in business ethics, it serves to demonstrate the range of approaches which have been taken in seeking to relate philosophical theory to moral decision-making in organisations. The only generalisation which may be made from this material is that the different

traditions of ethical theory provide a menu of approaches on which any individual can draw during the process.

From the above summary of available literature from within the business ethics paradigm, it seems that "mainstream" philosophical theory is seen as both an influence and a reflection of particular principles used in making moral decisions in the workplace but that, in its various forms, it fails to grasp the whole range of moral principles used and no pattern emerges which appears to reflect the reality. Thomas Whetstone (2001) confirms this when he argues that moral theory within an organisational setting should be formed through a tripartite theory which combines both teleological and deontological approaches with virtue theory. He asserts that philosophers have too often in the past sought a mononomic approach, promoting one type of theory above others in seeking an ultimate answer to ethical theory questions. In recognising that the context is multi-causal and multi-contextual, he argues for the contribution of virtue theory, relating to the nature of the person or actor to be laid across arguments relating to consequences and principles. He sees virtue theory as bringing a *personal* perspective to the more impersonal theories relating to the teleological and deontological approaches. However, he fails to recognise that virtue theory itself takes a teleological perspective.

Before establishing how close Whetstone's proposition might be to the reality of the project's informants, it is necessary to explore Neil's story.

4. Neil's story

Neil was a manager within an academic institution which had recently been restructured and which was going through a process of change in working practices in order to address an economic situation which had arisen. He had recently been promoted into the post and was having difficulty in establishing new relationships with former peers who he was now responsible for managing. In particular, one female member of staff (a former friend) was protesting at the introduction of a new pattern of working. She had a small

child and was expecting another. He decided to treat her in the same way as other colleagues but lost her friendship in doing so.

When Neil was asked during the interview with him whether he took a deontological or teleological approach to the problem, he was clear that the perspective was the former as illustrated by this extract from the interview.

> CK: When you were making that decision, were you thinking more about the consequences of the decision or more about doing the right thing for its own sake?
> Neil: More about doing the right thing, I think.

Yet, within Neil's cognitive maps of the decision can be found three constructs which would seem to imply a desire to be virtuous in some way.

> *Did not want to give in to protestation*
> *She had been a friend*
> *Wanted to treat people fairly as much as possible*

The first construct implies that he felt that, to be virtuous as a good manager he should not be easily swayed by an emotional protestation from doing what he had previously decided to be fair and just. The second construct expresses his concern at the possibility of losing a friend and consequent loyalty to that friendship, the virtue to be found in being loyal to a friend. The third construct suggests that he saw a virtue in treating people fairly. All three constructs express a virtue which Neil identified as being an influence of an "individual value" while he also felt that the need to be fair stemmed from his perception of organisational values as well. These can be summarised as follows:

(a) It is virtuous to be a good manager (in this case, do not be swayed from treating everyone fairly)
(b) It is virtuous to be loyal to a friend
(c) It is virtuous to treat everyone fairly.

It is helpful to recall MacIntyre's definition of a virtue at this point. He maintained that a virtue is a disposition which will enable the sustenance of a practice and the goods internal to that practice. This raises two questions in relation to Neil's story. If he is expressing virtues, what "practice" does he relate them to, if any, and, if so, what are the identifiable "goods" which he is seeking to promote within that practice?

An examination of Neil's narrative provides some explanation of the nature of the practice to which he was referring. We know that he was a manager within an academic institution. This quotation summarises his perception of his role in relation to the moral decisions involved.

> "I was responsible for a group of senior counsellors who helped with the kind of academic side of the course but relationships were not tested in the way in my new job managing staff but I am no longer programme manager but I am division leader and my prime responsibility is to manage my staff so what the new job has meant to me is these moral decisions which I am now forced to make and some of them do mean a different relationship between myself and people with whom I had a former relationship at a similar level." (Neil)

Thus Neil describes the "practice" (MacIntyre) which he is seeking to sustain; an academic manager with responsibility for staff and their strategic as well as day-to-day management. Further, this can be identified as seeking the virtues of the role in society in the Homeric sense. Neil is in the role of a manager and identifying the virtues required of a good manager which he is seeking to promote. If this, then, is the practice to which he was referring, what are the "goods", internal to the practice, which he was seeking to promote? The answer lies in the deduced virtues from his cognitive map as above, together with an examination of his narrative. The following quotations from his story are pertinent.

"I felt one of my priorities in terms of what I should do should be to do my best without any guarantee of success" (Neil)

"Now, in doing this to be fair, it seems to me that the first principle, to add a kind of moral dimension to it, if I should try to preserve the jobs of my staff to the best of my ability – I see that as my first aim" (Neil)

> "The next principle, which I think again has a strong kind of moral base to it, is that we should seek to be – I should try to be equitable then in terms of the work that one is expecting of one's staff" (Neil).

Thus Neil describes the virtues which he aspired to hold within his role as manager as doing his best (see cognitive map and narrative), being loyal to existing friendships (map), treating everyone fairly (map and narrative), and trying to preserve jobs wherever possible (narrative). MacIntyre makes the distinction between goods internal and external to the practice. In Neil's situation, the external goods would relate to the success of the students through quality teaching and learning opportunities. What are the internal goods here? MacIntyre refers to the element of competition as being a part of internal goods but also states that they refer to the whole community of people within a particular practice. In Neil's context, this must mean the staff for whom he was responsible and therefore he is seeking to promote the welfare of his staff to his best ability within the overall framework of performing the external goods. In that Neil's narrative relates to his worries about his relationships with various members of staff, his concern to treat them equally and fairly supports this identification of internal goods within the practice of managing within an academic institution which he is seeking to promote.

Before leaving Neil's situation and in further pursuance of comparison between theory and actual process, another interesting point emerges. The third construct cited above from Neil's cognitive map relates to the need to treat people as fairly as possible. This expresses Rawls' theory of justice which Neil is seeking to put in practice. It is an extremely strong construct

and Neil identifies it as coming both from his own values and that of the organisation by which he was employed. However, it is also expressed as a virtue. Thus justice becomes one virtue, confirming MacIntyre's theory that justice is one of many virtues and not a primary end in itself.

It appears that MacIntyre's theories are broadly supported by Neil's map and narrative. However this needs to be tested further within the context of another informant's situation before any more general conclusion can be made. I therefore consider Joanne's situation next in order to enlighten further the use of virtues in practice.

5. Joanne's story

Joanne makes four statements within her cognitive map from which virtues can be deduced around her role as a human resources officer unable to inform employees of the real effects of a proposed TUPE transfer.

> *Unjust situation around pension rights and government plans to adjust TUPE regs* (Justice)
> *Didn't want to go against management* (Loyalty to organisation)
> *Dishonest not to tell them* (Honesty)
> *Telling them would have upset them* (Concern for others).

In the above case, the virtues identified are summarised in brackets after each construct. Referring to Joanne's story, the following summarises her anger and frustration at the lack of caring that her employing organisation appeared to be demonstrating in its working practices. She was particularly concerned about the effect on one specific employee.

> CK: There was never a job there for him . . .
>
> J: No, but it just felt that they handled the situation so badly that it was really really difficult and the fact that they didn't care for any of

them they gave the impression that they didn't care. They gave lip service to a lot of things when really you know it was very difficult.

Taking the MacIntyre model and imposing it on Joanne's situation, the first question relates to the identification of the practice to which she is referring. We know that she is a human resources officer working within a local authority and that is the practice which she is seeking to promote. The external "goods" within that practice would be the successful administration and management of staff according to good employment practice. The community internal to the practice would be individuals affected by that practice. According to Joanne, there is a definite need to care for them and look after their interests. Her distress is caused by two factors in terms of MacIntyre's model. Both the external goods and the goods internal to the practice being supported by Joanne are not being achieved because she is being prevented from doing what she wants to do by a superior authority within her situation. Members of staff are going to be worse off after the transfer to another authority which goes against the spirit of the employment law around the transfer of an undertaking. In addition, she seeks to achieve a level of honesty which she sees is a prerequisite of being in her role of human resources officer. However, she is not allowed to divulge what she knows.

As in Neil's story, Joanne uses the concept of justice as one particular virtue without making any distinction in terms of its priority over another virtue which, again, supports MacIntyre's theory that justice is one of a number of virtues. I want to turn now to the philosophical perspective expressed by the informants and explore in detail how that "fits" with virtue theory as a teleological ethical theory.

6. The philosophical perspective of the informants

Due to a technical problem with the tape recorder, I only have the recorded answers to the question relating to ethical theory with 13 people. In response, two informants indicated that they both considered consequences and sought to do "right for right's sake". Of the remaining 11, nine were concerned with

"doing right" while two (Joanne and Leo) were more concerned about the consequences of their actions. If one were to ask oneself whether this related to the consequences to themselves or to others, a check reveals that Joanne was concerned both about her own reputation and the effect of upsetting employees about their rights under TUPE, while Leo worried both about his career and the effect on his friendship with his colleague. There was no relationship with gender or any other factor. The general conclusion from this is that the deontological approach within ethical theory would appear to reflect more accurately the way individuals approach their moral thinking processes within this group of informants. However, this assertion needs to be tested within the context of an informant's story before it can be justified. It has already been stated that virtue theory is teleological in perspective in that it seeks to promote goods internal to practices. By considering Isabel's case, I seek to throw light on an apparent disagreement between what the informants are saying and philosophical theory around the nature of virtues.

Isabel was a human resources officer within a local civil service institution. She was particularly concerned about the way a particular vacancy was being handled, feeling that the procedures breached the organisational equal opportunities policy. This is the way in which she answered the question in interview about ethical theory perspective.

> CK: The last question relates to ethical theory, really. When you were making that decision were you thinking more about doing right because it was the right thing to do or more about the consequences of your actions as to whether it would harm or benefit anybody?
>
> I: I think it was more about doing the right thing although consequences did come into it because it had consequences for both myself and other people but at the time it was just so against all the policies and procedures that we have indoctrinated into us that I just couldn't see how they could go ahead with it knowing that it goes against everything they dictate to us if you know what I mean. Yet because it was what they wanted they were prepared to do it.

Isabel here asserts that she is taking a deontological perspective while recognising that she was aware of some of the consequences of her actions. The following are the constructs within her cognitive map from which virtues can be deduced.

Unfairness to colleagues (Justice)

Felt cheated (Equality/justice)

Felt doing the right thing (Reasonableness).

One can assume that her practice was similar to that of Joanne who also worked in human resources and that Isabel perceived the virtues of justice and reasonableness as supporting the internal goods to that practice which relate, again, to the welfare of her and other members of staff. In this instance, she was concerned because the behaviour of others was preventing the promotion of the internal goods in that a stated organisational policy was being overlooked which gave everyone the opportunity to apply for internal vacancies. Yet, Isabel felt so strongly that what was happening was going against what was "right" in that she saw herself as acting "for right's sake" within a deontological framework. Thus there is a conflict between the teleological nature of virtues and the informant's identification of her own perspective being deontological.

There are four potential reasons behind this conflict, none of which are definitive answers to the question. However, they are submitted as possible resolutions. The first reason relates to the nature of acting in role. If one is acting in role is it possible to be totally aware of the influence of being in the role? If one is not conscious of all that is required in terms of behaviour and actions by being in a particular role, it may not be immediately obvious that the role is the motivation for the behaviour. Thus, if one is influenced to perform a "good" action, it might be *perceived* as being done for the sake of it, rather than being done because another person in that role would do the same or to promote the sustainability of the particular practice involved.

The second possible reason relates to the intrinsic nature of virtues as expressed by informants. The link between virtues, membership of community and sustenance of practices is not particularly obvious to a non-philosopher. If one seeks to act in a "kind" fashion, it can appear that this is being done for its own sake and, indeed, it might be argued that some virtues could be universalisable. If they are rooted within roles and membership of community within practices, then the nature of virtues is undoubtedly teleological but this is a theoretical step which needs to be made and is not immediately obvious to someone not familiar with ethical theory or the tradition of virtue ethics.

A third possibility is that the wording of the question to the informants was not clear or helpful. It may have been worded in such a way that "right for right's sake" sounded the more acceptable answer than "thinking about the consequences". If this was the case, then it could be argued that the researcher influenced the response in some way. However, I was extremely careful to ensure that the question was not "loaded" in one way or another and therefore feel that the possibility of researcher influence is highly unlikely.

Lastly, it is possible that the project's research informants were using a menu of different philosophical approaches to their situation and applying Kantian or Rawlsian principles as well as virtue theory. However, there is insufficient evidence of this to be able to explore it any further to any useful purpose.

What is clear is that there is a difference in approach between the informants' response to the question about ethical perspective and their use of virtues. I can only offer the above reasons as potential resolutions of the apparent conflict without being able to come to any overall conclusion.

7. The informants' use of virtues

This section seeks to generalise the evidence relating to the use of virtues amongst the project's informants. Up until now, specific examples have been

used from within individual informants' experiences. However, there are some patterns which emerge from the totality which need to be explored.

Only one informant made no reference to a virtue and it was clear that the concept of virtues ran through most people's thinking. In an analytical framework, 46 of a total of 197 concepts (23 per cent) related to virtues. 54 per cent of these came from male informants and 46 per cent from female. (Total group consisted of 56 per cent males and 44 per cent females.) The nature of the virtues has been sub-coded as follows:

Nature of virtue	**No. of concepts across 16 cases**	**Examples**
Loyalty	14	*Didn't want to go against management* (Joanne) *Felt colleagues being betrayed* (Edith) *Wanted to back a friend* (Leo)
Equality/justice/fairness	11	*Wanted to treat people fairly as much as possible* (Neil) *Fair to allow best person to continue* (Don) *Nobody losing out* (Bob)
Responsibleness	7	*Wanted funders to know responsible* (Ken) *Needed to demonstrate personal credibility to existing staff team* (Don)
Reasonableness/respect of others	6	*Worried about peers' changed perceptions* (Gaynor) *Worried about appearing unreasonable* (Angela)
Compassion/respect for others	4	*Desire to take into consideration extenuating circumstances* (Penny)
Morality/honesty	3	*Dishonest not to tell them* (Joanne)
Not to be jealous	1	*Jealous of officer offered promotion* (Isabel)

It is difficult to quantify the relevant strength of the influence of virtues because those concepts in the maps expressing an aspiration towards a particular virtue appear to be random with no pattern to them. Their influence comes from across the sources identified from society, to peer group, to organisational and individual values.

However, a further point arises in relation to gender. The examples of virtues given by informants in the above table were randomly taken to illustrate the coding of "loyalty", "equality/justice/fairness", "responsibleness", "reasonableness/respect of others", "compassion/respect for others", "morality/honesty" and "not to be jealous". The nature of the codes can be described as pertaining to Gilligan's concepts of justice and care as follows:

Nature of virtue	**Justice/care perspective**
Loyalty	Justice and care
Equality/justice/fairness	Justice
Responsibleness	Justice
Reasonableness/respect of others	Care
Compassion/respect for others	Care
Morality/Honesty	Care
Not to be jealous	Care

If the justice/care labels are then compared with the former table giving examples of virtues expressed by informants, there is a very strong relationship between the justice or care perspective and examples provided by males or females. For example, the virtue "reasonableness/respect of others" is expressed mainly by females. The virtue of "equality/justice/fairness" is propounded by males. It is not appropriate to analyse the influence of gender any further in terms of justice or care because there is always the possibility that, for example, females will act "in role" of a male model as has already been identified within this group of informants. Similarly, some virtues can

be difficult to allocate to males or females such as that of "loyalty" which can be seen as a male-oriented concept or as a means of caring within relationships from a female perspective. Rather, the whole menu is available to all.

To explain this in a different way, the greater majority of informants refer to virtues and the desire to be virtuous. Depending on whether they are male or female, these virtues tend to take a justice or care perspective.

8. Emotivism and the virtues

The previous chapter outlined the debate between emotions and rationality and indicated a need to move away from an unhelpful dualism in recognition of the way in which informants had demonstrated their use of emotions against other influences within the totality of the moral decision. MacIntyre describes the history of moral philosophy as a series of swings between emotivism and rationality. He defines emotivism in terms of relating to the *use* of moral language rather than its *meaning*. At the same time, he perceives modern ethical theory in use as being primarily emotivist in character and argues that what is lacking is the *telos* of Aristoteleian thought. Thus he seeks to tie virtues into moral tradition and into the influences of membership of community while defining the good life as being the overall purpose to be sought in exercising virtues. The question is then raised as to whether this project's informants' use of emotions alongside virtues challenges MacIntyre's theory in any way. In order to examine this in more detail, I draw on the example of Edith's cognitive map.

Edith was a financial director within a health-related agency. Within the structural changes being made within the National Health Service at the time, she became aware of a dubious practice being promulgated in relation to a fellow director's appointment. She decided to fax the evidence to the person concerned, breaking organisational confidentiality. Within her cognitive map, she identifies four constructs all of which relate to her individual values and all of which include a reference to the way she *felt* about the situation.

Felt colleagues being betrayed

Feeling contempt for line manager

Felt loyalty to organisation being betrayed

Felt people in organisation had right to know about it (Edith).

When one considers the above four statements, it is clear that they are a mixture of emotions and statements relating to a moral evaluation of the situation which imply virtues. For example, the first construct *felt colleagues being betrayed* implies the virtue of loyalty and honesty. The second, *feeling contempt for line manager*, while implying some form of moral evaluation, relates more to her general emotions in terms of contempt within the situation in which she found herself. The third and fourth constructs imply different forms of virtues. The consistent use of the term "feeling" could lead to an argument here in favour of the emotivist approach. However, MacIntyre's identification of the *purpose* of the use of the virtues overcomes this, together with his definition of emotivist theory in terms of the use of moral language. This serves to overcome any movement away from a conclusion that, again, the duality of emotions and rationality is not helpful and that emotions and moral evaluative language are both factors within a given moral decision in practice.

9. Conclusions

A further examination of the relationship between emotions, rationality and moral judgements has supported the conclusions of the previous chapter that the dualism between emotions and rationality is not useful and, further, that emotions and evaluative moral statements are both included as relevant factors within a moral decision. It has also been demonstrated that the nature of the moral statements made by the project's informants is accurately reflected within MacIntyre's theory of virtue ethics and that his framework of the use of virtues can be successfully imposed upon the situations encountered by the informants. An apparent disagreement between informants and philosophical theory as to the philosophical perspective of

their decisions has been examined and a number of reasons submitted for this incongruity such as to sufficiently weaken any argument that the informants' perspectives are not compatible with MacIntyre's teleological view of the virtues.

In an examination of the virtues, the concept of justice has been shown to be used by informants as one of a number of virtues, rather than one end to be sought above all others, thus undermining Rawls' theory of justice. In a previous chapter I have considered the nature of Kohlberg's Stage Six in levels of moral development. This depended heavily on the search for justice being the prime motivation for moral judgements and this becomes yet another reason for denying the likelihood of the sixth stage existing in practice.

Virtues can be seen to have a justice or care approach relating to the gender of the decision-maker. This supports Gilligan's theories.

Finally, I need to reflect back on existing literature around applying philosophical theory to what happens in practice when someone makes a moral decision in the workplace. This project has provided evidence for support for the teleological perspective dominated by virtue theory reflecting best the content of the processes involved in making a moral decision.

Singer (2000) identified five normative rules for study against ethical behaviour at work (utility, rights, justice, principlism and care). Following empirical research around devised scenarios, she concluded that the most important rule to emerge was that of justice, followed by the norm of rights. While I have found evidence of justice and care, there is little evidence of Singer's principlism, reference to any argument with an element of utility, or of a reference to the need for an individual's rights to be upheld. However, Singer appears to have failed to include virtue theory in her research.

One of the factors pertaining to virtues identified by MacIntyre relates to an individual's relationship with members of their community, using the term

"community" in its widest sense, alongside the moral tradition embraced by society. The next step in this project is therefore to investigate how membership of various communities has influenced the project's informants in the making of their moral decisions.

Chapter Nine:

Membership of Community: an individual in an organisation

1. Introduction

Previous chapters of this thesis have considered the process of how we obtain our moral values as individuals in relation to making moral decisions in the workplace. Theories have been outlined which seek to suggest that it is membership of communities which provide us with a framework of values to which we can refer when faced with a moral judgement to be made. However, an individual can be a member of a variety of communities, all with differing value frameworks, some of which may conflict with others. The purpose of the next two chapters is to explore the influence of membership of communities; how those communities work and exert their authority. This thesis is about moral decisions in the workplace so I start with the organisational influence in this chapter and outline current theories relating to the influence of an employing organisation upon an individual employee when she is faced with a moral "dilemma" within the context of employment. A number of issues are raised in relation to the nature of an organisation and its relationship with its employees. I also consider the contribution of the field of *business ethics* in considering the tensions between employer and employee. Finally, within this chapter, is the question of the influence of *society* as identified by some of the project's informants. The following chapter considers membership of groups and the influence of peers as well as what it means to be a *professional* when making a moral decision in the workplace.

We are expected to behave in particular ways and not in others when working for a particular organisation. How do we learn these rules and how much do they influence us when they might potentially conflict with what our personal values are telling us to do? When we join an organisation, we become a

member of a "community" of individuals who have come together to achieve a specific purpose.

Within the relationship between employer and employee, there is an issue of power which, however one looks at it, has to be seen as being heavily weighted in favour of the employer. This, too, raises questions of how much this imbalance of power affects the nature of moral decision making in the workplace. As part of this issue, it is recognised that organisations often expect their employees to demonstrate particular emotions as part of their role (Hochschild, 1983). The stresses which arise from this requirement will also be addressed.

Kohlberg summarises the problems of the potential conflicts between employer and employee thus:

> When the rules of a system or an institution conflict with the welfare or rights of an individual within that system, the person who is in a position of responsibility for solving that conflict must necessarily formulate ideas or principles which recognise the just or fair claims of both in order to resolve the conflict and to act fairly and responsibly (Kohlberg, 1984, p468)

Kohlberg argues that the role of the person and the responsibilities within it stimulate that person into more principled thinking. Whether this is the case will be explored further in this chapter.

What exactly is the nature of the conflict between a business organisation and an individual? Milton Friedman's work has epitomised the attitude towards business as being to make a profit for its shareholders (Friedman, 1993). Within this context, is there room for individuals to act in an *ethical* way or is business like a game of poker with its own rules as Carr (1993) suggests? Various writers have attempted to reconcile the potential conflict. Dekker argues that profit-making can be of value to the wider society or environment within which a corporation is placed (Dekker, 1990). Jones (1995) suggests

that ethical principles within a corporation (trust, trustworthiness and cooperativeness) enhance a firm's competitiveness. While acknowledging that this debate is taking place, this thesis is more concerned with the effect of that conflict on the individual. For this reason, no mention is made of the wider issues relating to the role of business organisations within the community or society where it operates.

Kohlberg's theories have been applied in the literature by a number of writers to the development of organisations (Maclagan, 1996). Logsdon and Yuthas (1997) apply Kohlberg's individual stages of moral development to organisations and argue that organisations develop along similar lines, converting individual behaviour within stages to corporate behaviour. They identify types of organisational actions as commensurate with Kohlberg's stages. This line of theory exemplifies a quantitative approach to organisations, identifying them as a separate construct to the individuals of which they are comprised with a "mind" of their own and a "will" of their own. Does an organisation have its own "personality"? Intuitively, one would answer in the affirmative. Yet, this fails to acknowledge the essential humanity and complexity of such structures. The concept of the organisation becomes a social construction which means something different to each of us, depending on our individual experiences.

This theme will be taken up in greater detail in this chapter which begins by considering the nature of what is meant by an organisation. Consideration is then given to the literature around organisational culture and organisational climate, how they are related and their influence on corporate and individual values. This leads to a discussion of the significance of the influence of written codes of ethics within organisations.

Much has been written on the ethical behaviour and consequent moral responsibility of corporations which not only lays down prescriptions for actions but also considers the philosophical arguments around corporate moral responsibility. While acknowledging its significance, I have chosen to omit this as not being totally relevant to the point of this project which is to

enlighten issues around the individual in relation to the communities of which she is a member.

The next section of this chapter investigates the relationship between the individual and the organisation. Maclagan (1996) raises the problems of different individuals within organisations working at different levels of individual moral development. He also raises the question of whether an individual influences an organisation or whether the stronger influence is by the organisation itself. I also consider the intrinsic power relationships involved and emotions in organisations. The issues around the subject of what has come to be known as "whistleblowing", the publicising of practices considered to be unethical by employees are examined before, lastly, recognising that, ultimately, we are all members of a larger community which can be loosely termed as "society", I have briefly covered issues relating to influences on individuals from "society", before drawing to conclusions.

2. The nature of an organisation

What do we mean by the term "organisation"? Much has been written about organisations, motivated by a need to understand how they function and how their performance can be improved in order to increase profits and/or quality of service. In order to "make sense" of the concept, various definitions have been offered, many of which tend to generalise to such an extent that the multifarious nature of organisations is lost. Thus, Hinton and Reitz offer the following definition: "Organisations can be defined as social systems composed of two or more groups and deliberately designed to achieve a common goal" (Hinton and Reitz, 1971, p403). They maintain that an organisational structure imposes authority and the potential resolution of intergroup conflict. It offers common goals. Schein takes a broader view, offering what he calls the "traditional" definition of an organisation:

> An organisation is the planned co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common, explicit

> purpose or goal, through division of labour and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility (Schein, 1988, p15).

This fails to offer a definition sought by this project in terms of social groupings and influence. P B Smith, on the other hand, recognises that "organisations are for the most part made up of overlapping systems of innumerable small groups" (Smith, 1973, p1). Within these systems, he identifies two main sources of social influence, namely, social comparison and control. Social comparison occurs "in any situation in which one uses another person as a reference point in determining one's own actions" (Smith, 1973, p1). Smith makes the distinction between organisations which he sees as being directed towards a single goal and groups which he defines in terms of face-to-face membership. This distinction can be criticised in that his definition of groups fails to recognise the factor of shared goals and values. It does, however, serve to reinforce the strength of Hinton and Reitz's definition of organisation in terms of a group of groups. More recently, Granitz and Ward's research supports the theory that organisations consist of a collection of groups (Granitz and Ward, 2001). This raises the question of the potential for inter-group conflict within an organisation which very often exists and which is obviously a factor to consider when investigating an individual's situation within a moral decision in the workplace.

Moving away from a quantitative approach, others offer no definition as such but, rather, an intuitively more real perspective on the multifariousness of organisations with an emphasis on issues of power (including gender), the social interdependence of their members and the fluidity of the shapes and forms which are organisations, denying the possibility of objective knowledge and reality while painting a picture of interweaving narratives (Hassard and Parker, 1993). I would hope to be able to capture some of the flavour of this perspective in considering the nature of the relationship between individuals and organisations.

I shall confine the rest of this chapter to the study of business organisations. By that, I intend to include corporations in business to make a profit and

those not-for-profit organisations which employ personnel such as government departments, local authorities and some parts of the independent/voluntary sector. The common factor is that individuals are employed in paid work.

3. Organisational culture and climate

> Values are the bedrock of any corporate culture. As the essence of a company's philosophy for achieving success, values provide a sense of common direction for all employees and guidelines for their day-to-day behaviour. These formulas for success determine (and occasionally arise from) the types of corporate heroes, and the myths, rituals, and ceremonies of the culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1981, p21).

The above quotation, while being relatively early in the recent literature, summarises the nature of quantitative-based theory around the relationship between an organisation's culture and its values, the implication being that values then provide the underpinning checks and balances and steer the pattern of acceptable behaviour of an organisation's members. It would therefore appear from the above citation that the concept of corporate culture is significant in providing an influence on individual employees' moral behaviour. There is much literature about organisational culture which attempts to analyse it and to offer suggestions to managers for its modification. Before considering this further, there is a linguistic problem to be clarified.

(a) Culture v climate: a linguistic problem

Some of the literature within organisational theory refers to "culture" when talking about the underpinning shared creeds of an organisation which govern its relationships between its members, its stakeholders and its procedures (Chen et al, 1997; Key, 1999; Parker, 2000; Sinclair, 1993). Other literature refers to "climate" (Agarwal and Malloy, 1999; Barnett and Vaicys, 2000; Victor and Cullen, 1988).

Dennison (1996) identifies two different streams of literature relating to organisational culture and organisational climate respectively and suggests that there are different characteristics relating to research methodology and epistemology, with climate research stemming from Lewinian field theory while culture research derives from symbolic interaction and social construction perspectives. However, in investigating the literature, the distinction is unclear, particularly when at times there has been a crossover between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Denison finally concludes that the two research traditions relating to climate and culture should be seen as two different interpretations of the same phenomenon, rather than differences in the phenomenon itself. Indeed, in two instances in the literature (Sims, 1992; Weber, 1993), the words *culture* and *climate* are used interchangeably without separate definition. I shall use the term *culture* as an all-embracing term while referring to *climate* as that element of the culture which relates to shared *values* and *norms*, for example *ethical work climate* which has come to have a particular meaning within business ethics research following the work of Victor and Cullen (1988). This is not to say that when *culture* is used in the literature it does not include the normative element (Key, 1999). Rather, the use of the word *climate* appears to emphasise the significance of that evaluative element.

(b) Organisational culture

I intend to concentrate on three authors in considering the nature of organisational culture. The first is Hofstede who takes a modernistic anthropological perspective and develops it within an organisational context. He depicts culture as mental programming, the "software of the mind" (Hofstede, 1991, p4). Culture is *learnt* from an individual's social environment. At the core of culture is the individual's value system. Other aspects of culture relate to symbols, heroes and rituals. He defines layers of culture which people hold depending on their membership of different groups and categories in their lives. These include a national level, a regional level, a gender level and, for those employed, an organisational level.

What does he mean by organisational culture? He lists a number of attributes which he suggests are commonly held. Organisational culture is "holistic" (pertaining to a whole more than the sum of its parts), "historically determined", "related to the things anthropologists study" (symbols and rituals), "socially constructed", "soft" and "difficult to change" (Hofstede, 1991, pp179-180). He therefore defines it as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organisation from another" (Hofstede, 1991, p180).

In a later publication, Hofstede describes culture as "the collective mental programming of the people in an environment" (Hofstede, 1997, p224). He considers it to be difficult to change because, not only does it "belong" to a number of people, but it has become enshrined within institutions and their life experience. In this article, Hofstede is concerned about the influence of *national* culture, that is, the culture of a particular nation. He argues that a management theory is the product of a nation which may not be appropriate or acceptable to another nation.

However, given my definition of an organisation as relating to a number of interdependent groups, Hofstede's construct of organisational culture strikes one as particularly monistic in approach. It apparently fails to recognise the diverse nature of organisations and the unique culture which they have developed.

Harris (1994) offers a different perspective on an individual's relationship to the organisation and the elements of organisational culture which serve to influence this relationship, applying the principles of schema theory. He defines schemas as "mental maps which enable individuals to traverse and orient themselves within their experiential terrain" (Harris, 1994, p310) and describes five different types of "in-organisation" schemas which are pertinent to the sense-making of organisational culture.

1. Self schemas: relate to a description of self within the context of the organisation, for example, I am a white female accountant who is honest and hardworking.
2. Person schemas: these relate to other individuals and groups of individuals within organisation, for example, management cannot be trusted, the boss likes black coffee, etc.
3. Organisation schemas: organised thoughts relating to the organisation of which the individual is a member, often referred to as an "other", for example, "headquarters".
4. Object/concept schemas: relate to such objects as "offices" or concepts such as "quality".
5. Event schemas: often capture scripts of events such as an ideal staff meeting. They also offer guidance to behaviour in celebrations and other organisational rites.

All these schemas add up together to collate information relating to life within an organisation. These are shared through common experiences.

> Given that members of organisational subgroups are likely to share more immediate experiences with each other than with members of the entire organisation, it is not surprising that the schemas which emerge in such subgroups (subcultures) tend to be more specific, more well-defined, and more generally shared than those emerging across an organisation's entire membership (Harris, 1994, p313).

Schema sense-making can occur either consciously or unconsciously. Newer members of an organisation are more likely to make a conscious effort to make sense of new experience. Harris refers to theory that people gain their social cognitions of organisational schemas through "mental dialogues" with other people within the situation. He asserts that the arguments supplied for those persons are, in fact, the direct expression of normative and cultural pressures. He gives the example of a newcomer to a company who spots a good idea for increased productivity. In deciding whether to express this idea, the individual might refer to her schemas relating to her supervisor (who

would support her) and her peers (who would not like her "rocking the boat"). In the light of the dialogue between these schemas, she might decide to keep quiet until she has been there longer.

Harris refers to the two types of commitment to organisations which have been identified: normative (or attitudinal) and compliance (or calculative). Normative commitment would be displayed within mental dialogue as "we" because it implies an attachment to the organisation based on an acceptance of the values and beliefs characterising that organisation. Compliance commitment would be a decision to comply with accepted behaviour for pay or continued employment. The mental dialogues would relate more to an "I" and "they" scenario, thus highlighting the tensions between employer and employee.

Harris' work is illuminating for three reasons. Firstly, it recognises that there is a cross-influence between individual and organisation. Secondly, it assumes that organisations consist of a number of sub-cultures and that these sub-cultures influence both their individual members and the organisation itself. Thirdly, it relates individual conceptualisation of membership and experiences of organisations very closely to concepts within cognitive maps, theory which is being used in the empirical part of this research to illustrate the process of moral decision-making in the workplace. However, while recognising the fact that we all tend to classify experiences, events, people, as a part of that sense-making process, the process of applying that to theory of organisations seems to force what happens in practice into an unhelpful categorisation with the result that the fluidity and diversity of the processes is lost. Our classifications are ever-changing from hour to hour and our perception of our "environment" changes constantly.

Parker (2000) gives an alternative perspective on organisational culture and identity from a "radical humanist" stance. He recognises the diverse nature of intraorganisational cultures and the multifariousness of the identifications generated. Thus, an individual employee can identify with a number of different classifications within the organisation. He tells the story of three

organisations based on his experiences of working with managers in a setting of a number of semi-structured interviews. These stories themselves are evaluative but the values underpinning their narrative are not identified. In order to clarify classification, Parker sees culture as a continuing "us" and "them" situation and identifies three particular groupings which appeared to be common within the three organisations he studied. These were spatial/functional, generational and occupational/professional. Thus, within an organisation, different groupings can be identified around their workspace (the people in the upper office), their length of service (rather than age) and their occupation. The following is a definition which he offers of organisational culture:

> Organizational culture is a continually contested process of making claims of difference within and between groups of people who are formally constituted as members of a defined group (Parker, 2000, p233).

What this description of organisational culture offers is the element of shared membership of community with all its implications and a sense of the diversity of organisations both internally and externally, between each other as each has built up its own history, traditions and norms in relation to the individuals which have contributed to this process. If one adds to it the concept of a type of corporate "sense-making" of events and behaviour relating to a set of causal beliefs (Silvester et al, 1999), then the total picture begins to reflect the type of socially-constructed reality which we refer to as organisational culture.

(c) Culture and values: ethical work climates

In considering the definition of organisational culture, it has become apparent that culture and values are very much interlinked and that values help to define the nature of the culture, underpin it and are inextricably bound up in it. Indeed, Hinings et al (1996) conclude that because of the close relationship between values and structure, it is better to refer to shared *values*

rather than *culture.* However, the work on ethical work *climates* sheds further light on this relationship. Victor and Cullen are generally recognised as being the main protagonists of the concept of ethical work climates. They define them as follows: "The prevailing perceptions of typical organisational practices and procedures that have ethical content constitute the ethical work climate" (Victor and Cullen, 1988, p101). They make the distinction between work climate and culture in that they see an ethical work climate as being an element of the overall culture which is more comprehensive including, for example, "patterns of behaviour, artefacts, ceremonies, and special language" (Victor and Cullen, 1988, p103). They recognise that there can be a number of ethical work climates within an organisation as they relate to the organisational sub-cultures of sub-groups within the corporate whole.

Victor and Cullen carried out a piece of empirical research with employees of four different companies in order to identify the nature of the ethical work climate which was prevalent. They uncovered a wide range of climates within the companies, finding that the majority of workers developed some level of satisfaction with their organisation's climates. They assumed that those that did not tended to move on. They recognised, however, that a lack of fit would cause stress, turnover or dissatisfaction.

Victor and Cullen drew conclusions relating to the influences on the climates from their results. They identified three sources – societal norms, organisational form and firm-specific factors. Social norms tended to influence towards a caring framework. A more structured, bureaucratic company tended towards a climate which was law and code-orientated. They recognised that it is unlikely that any one firm will have homogeneous climates across different work roles, lengths of employee tenure and sub-groups.

Even if it is possible to modify such an ethical work climate as identified by Victor and Cullen the question then arises as to how much that very climate affects an individual when faced with a moral decision within the organisational context. Is there a link between a positive climate and a pattern of ethical behaviour within a workforce? A number of studies have

been carried out in an attempt to establish the answer to this question. In one case a strong link was discovered (Bartels et al, 1998), in others very little relationship was established between climate and ethical behaviour (Wimbush et al, 1997; Barnett and Vaicys, 2000; Fritzsche, 2000). It tended to moderate behaviour to a certain extent in some conditions; Fritzsche found some evidence that an ethical climate working at a lower level of moral development would be more likely to produce more unethical decisions. However, all these studies were carried out using quantitative methods involving artificial vignettes of potential situations with a moral element, together with questionnaires, methods which I have argued are fundamentally flawed in seeking to address the complexities of such research questions.

It seems that any attempt to capture this unique, ephemeral, condition of an organisation is bound to place it in a straitjacket where it loses some elements and becomes distorted. The acknowledgement that any organisation will contain a number of different ethical work climates according to its informal groupings of members means that the totality becomes too diverse and complicated to be able to "analyse". The reality of it will vary depending on individual people's perceptions of it and there is therefore no "absolute" object to grasp. The concept demonstrates that it is socially constructed and we can know what we are talking about together but our experiences of it will all differ.

4. The significance of corporate codes of ethics

For those who promote the ability to modify organisational culture, written corporate codes of ethics become a potentially significant tool for a manager. Much has been written on the efficacy of corporate codes and it would be remiss to ignore that group of writing without summarising it and commenting on its general conclusions. Issues which arise around the introduction of an ethical code relate to the adequacy of communication processes (Kohut and Corriher, 1994) which include training (White and Lam, 2000), availability of any document, familiarity with content (Somers, 2001; Schwartz, 2001), relevance (Wotruba et al, 2001) and relationship to

individual values (Nwachukwu and Vitell, 1997; Sims and Keon, 2000). At the same time, the production of an ethical code is acknowledged to have a separate purpose of providing a positive image for the organisation involved to its external stakeholders. But does it make any difference? The literature appears quite balanced between writing which promotes the effectiveness of ethical codes in moderating unethical behaviour and that which denies the efficacy of such codes.

Pierce and Henry (1996) devise a model of ethical decision making related to computer technology. They propose that the main influences on an individual relate to their own personal code, the informal code in the workplace (acceptable behaviour of peers and workgroup) and the formal code of the employers. Alongside these primary influences are also those of the law and professional codes. They sent questionnaires out to people working in the computer industry. One of the questions they asked related to the relative influence of personal, informal and formal codes. The strongest influence came from personal codes (49%) followed by informal codes (34%) and formal codes (17%).

Brien (1997) acknowledges this failure of formal codes to influence organisational members and identifies the reasons as relating to both internal and external factors. Internally, they may be inconsistent, impracticable, ambiguous and, therefore, lacking in internal authority. He identifies two strands of inadequacies relating to a code's external authority. The first relates to an inherent ethical weakness within the organisation. This manifests itself in either or both of (a) leaders failing to endorse it and support it and (b) employees failing to internalise it. The second weakness relates to an unsuccessful institutionalisation of the code. "Codes may fail because the structure and culture of the organisation is not conducive to ethical action" (Brien, 1997, p23). From this, Brien concludes that the organisational climate and the institutionalisation of codes have more effect on the "ethicality" of an organisation than do written codes.

There is an issue about the ethicality of imposing such a means of control on employee behaviour. This is expressed most strongly by Schwartz (2000, 2001) who argues that since there is no "right" code of ethics, taking a relativistic stance, it is difficult to justify the production and promotion of corporate codes. It is also recognised that their existence adds to the potential conflict between individuals and their employers when different moral values exist between the two (Sims, 2000; Wilmott, 1998).

It is apparent, then, that the use of corporate codes of ethics to change organisational members' behaviour is fraught with problems. This is confirmed by Baron (1999) whose research with nurses indicated that they tended not to use formal professional codes *per se* because they consisted of universalisable statements which could not always be applied to their particular context. Yet it serves to highlight the potential conflict within the relationship between an employee and her employer where moral values are concerned.

In analysing the research informants' cognitive maps, those concepts which related to organisational values were considered in the light of theory relating to the influence of institutionalised (overt) codes and informal organisational culture. Of the 13 concepts involved, seven related to what appeared to be an overt code. For example,

> *Can I substantiate the recommendation?* (Frederick)
>
> *Loyalty to funders* (Ken).

There was no specific reference to any written code or policy, (for example, equal opportunities policy). However, the existence of written policies and procedures is implied at least within Isabel's situation where she was challenging the process of an appointment. Examples referring to an underlying organisational culture include the following:

> *Other people had failed grievances* (Gaynor)
>
> *Had happened before – expected norm/industry standard* (Colin).

Another point to note around the distinction between codes and cultures is that the situation described by Neil appears to be indicating a conflict between a past culture and a new code. He talks of people being employed to teach for different numbers of hours in the past depending on a wide variety of circumstances and a newer code that, because of pressures to make economic savings, was aiming to ensure that everyone shared the teaching burden in an equitable way. It was part of his role to change that organisational culture through the introduction of a new code. The nature of the organisational culture which emerges from the cognitive maps of the project's informants appears to be non-ethical and relating to expected behaviour, actions and beliefs rather than having any specific moral content.

5. The tensions between "business" and "ethics"

The discipline of *business ethics* has identified the potential moral tensions between an employer and employee. Most students of business ethics in talking to a stranger to the subject will have been faced with the jokes about "ethics in business?!" implying that the phrase is an oxymoron and that business has its own set of rules of behaviour which might not be considered ethical within other contexts. They would have their supporters academically. Albert Carr likens business to a game of poker with its own set of rules (Carr, 1993). Martin Parker recognises the tension between business and ethics and that the language and theory of ethical theory appears to mean little within an organisational setting where the "bottom line" matters (Parker, 1998b; Pearson and Parker, 2001).

It is a majority public opinion that business exists to make a profit. Indeed, sometimes it pays such business not to be ethical in order to achieve a greater profit. Is it right that an individual should be expected to lie about the nature of a product in order to achieve greater sales? Is there an argument that greater profits benefit the country's economy in general and that therefore everyone gains? These are the dilemmas of behaviour in business and it is

these dilemmas that the relatively new discipline of business ethics has sought to address. No longer are we considering an individual and her personal codes of conduct in isolation. She is faced with organisational aims and objectives and rules of behaviour which may or may not be at variance with his or her own. How this conflict is resolved in practice will be the subject of empirical research. It is, however, helpful to consider a sample of writing within the field of business ethics in order to analyse this approach. I will confine my research here to questions of individual moral decision making in business. The field is large on macro-moral issues relating to the morality of the economy, morality within an international business setting, and environmental issues, among others. These problems are not directly relevant to this particular piece of research. However, I would recognise that how an individual deals with influences on her moral decision making does have implications for macro-moral issues.

One approach to this conflict is that of Albert Carr who, in his well-known article "Is Business Bluffing Ethical?" likens business to a game of poker with its own rules outside of morality (Carr, 1993). Ethics in business brings its own perspective to aspects of moral behaviour. The relationship between the individual employee and the corporate employer involves the employee's obligation to obey the instructions of the employer. This raises particular ethical questions around degrees of responsibility and accountability.

While almost pre-dating the development of the discipline of business ethics, Downie considers the problems of individual responsibility, authority and corporate responsibility (Downie, 1970). He maintains that, if someone is compelled to do something, they then could not be held responsible for it. He describes a "role" as being a "cluster of rights and duties with some sort of social function" (p128). He argues that it is not possible to separate the person as an individual from that person in a particular role, that the person has chosen to take on a role and that this can cause some conflicts between the "person" and the "role". He defines two attitudes as being "ignore your own views" and "resign if you disagree". However, he feels that the latter is

normally qualified by the former and argues that an individual is seldom responsible for "the total content of an action" (p142).

More recently, ten Bos (1997) considers the responsibility of individuals within organisations and describes the theory that organisations attempt to subsume the individual moral responsibility by setting down guidelines and rules which are superimposed upon individuals. Morality in organisations becomes a question of obeying corporate directives rather than taking individual responsibility. "The horizon of a particular action is thus not determined by how the actor herself thinks about its effects, but by its being in conformity with the rules laid down by those who occupy a higher rank in the bureaucratic hierarchy" (ten Bos, 1997, p999). The overall effect of this ten Bos summarises as an alienation of the individual in an organisation with their own moral nature and he identifies three particular elements within the actions of organisations which generate this alienation.

They remove the *proximity* of any action. He gives the example of Shell's activities within Nigeria and describes how, in a large corporation like Shell, an individual's actions are judged by their loyalty to the employer. "The result is that individual moral scruple is rendered predictable by not allowing it to come to the fore" (p1002).

A process of dehumanisation occurs which ten Bos terms the "*effacement of Face*". Those who might be harmed or benefit from a company's actions are removed and discounted as being incapable of being considered within a moral context, justified either by the claim that they themselves are immoral or by using the business "paradigm" of business for business' sake. "The moral capacity of competitors, customers, and other stakeholders who do not belong to the team, is mangled in the wringing-machine of efficiency and speed" (p1003). Ten Bos argues that, in reality, business competitors, for example, come to accept and anticipate such effacement.

There is a *reduction to traits* in that people in organisations are encouraged not to see people holistically as individuals but as a collection of traits to

which no moral quality can be ascribed. One example he gives of this is hospitals where people are treated as bundles of nerves, muscles, and bones.

Ten Bos concludes that the tension between the individual and the organisation can be beneficial for two reasons. First, some rules can be "good" rules, for example, a health and safety rule which gives permission to usurp authority for the safety of others. Secondly, he argues that individuals do not follow rules to the last word. This element of choice ensures that individuals within organisations retain their own morality.

Other writers have struggled with the problem of conflicts between "family/individual" and "employee/business" roles. Such are Robert C Solomon (1993) and Joseph Desjardins (1993). They both apply an Aristotelian approach. Solomon refers back to Aristotle's emphasis on the cultivation of individual responsibility and virtues in character and argues that business ethics should look more to the responsibility of the individual rather than utilitarian or Kantian theories to justify decisions. He argues that we should take a contextual view of business ethics but in a holistic way, remembering that an individual, as well as being an employee, is also a member of a family, a community, and so on. Desjardins, on the other hand, takes this approach further in arguing that if companies develop "good" people this works towards breaking down the barriers between personal life and life in employment.

An example of how recent work in the field of business ethics has looked to moral philosophy to explain individual behaviour is that of Glover et al (1997). They review the literature relating to philosophical theory and its influence on individuals. They refer to three different pieces of research which come to different conclusions relating to predominant influences, utilitarian, deontological or no single principle. They put forward the proposition that individual values determine moral judgements and that an individual weighs up conflicting values. They recognise that moral dilemmas come from either a conflict between individual values or a conflict between individual and institutional values. Glover et al are concerned with the

former. Hypotheses are tested that strong concerns for honesty, fairness, or concern for others, would induce higher levels of ethical decision making. However, none of these hypotheses were confirmed.

Martin Parker acknowledges the tension between "business" and "ethics" and comments on the prevalent modernist approach to business ethics as follows.

> Much of the project of 'Ethics' in general can be seen as an attempt to develop knowledge about how we (or they) should behave through employing some version of (the scientific) method (Parker, 1998b) pS32).

However, Parker argues that, given a rejection of any final state of "knowledge", it seems impossible to ever prescribe for business any universal types of rules. This means that ethics reverts to a description of practice, which leads to the question of "what is ethics?" He concludes by stating that his scepticism should not imply a despair for the future of business and ethics.

> Recognising the paradoxes within 'Ethics' and 'Business Ethics' is one way to stop these words from having so much hold on us. Perhaps then we can begin to develop ways of expressing our dreams and nightmares that do not fall back into the *agon* so easily. (Parker, 1998b, pS35).

Given the theoretical tensions which exist between the individual and her employing organisation, I seek next to explore in greater depth the relationship between the two parties.

6. The relationship of the individual with the organisation

What, then, is the relationship of the individual with the organisation? Which influences which or is there a constant exchange of influences between the two?

This literature review spans approximately 25 years of work and in that time companies and individuals do appear to have become more aware of the significance of moral issues in business. The best support for this statement is the evolution of the whole discipline of business ethics which is now a recognised field in itself. Early work includes that of Lincoln et al (1982) who begin with a literature review of the problems of the conflicts between individual and corporate values, between family values and organisational commitment and personal values and climbing the corporate ladder. Their research consisted of mailed questionnaires relating to 11 topics designed to test attitudes to commitment to organisation, to the family and to attitudes relating to climbing the corporate ladder. Executives reported "frequently the case" for statements relating to resorting to "dirty tricks" in order to progress in one's career, that all personal values have to be set aside in order to advance and that "to climb the ladder, one must not only be prepared to aggressively move past those who stand in the way, but may find it necessary to "clear the way" (Lincoln et al, 1982, p484). On a more positive note, the most ethical belief exhibited related to a statement which came up as "infrequently the case" which described organisational goals as relating more to making money than to providing customer satisfaction.

The question of how much the results of the same research would have changed if carried out again in the early 21st century would be the subject of an interesting thesis in itself. I suspect that there would be greater reluctance to *admit* the 1982 results even if the behaviour had not changed significantly. What it shows is that the organisational influence was so great as to overcome any individual moral values in the chase for economic goals.

Can the very nature of an organisation influence the propensity for ethical behaviour? This was tested by Schminke (2001) in relation to the size of an employer. He assumed that ethical behaviour would be more encouraged within small, organic organisations but, through a questionnaire method, discovered the opposite. Individuals in larger, more formal organisations indicated a greater ethical predisposition (Schminke, 2001). However,

Smigel (1970) found the opposite and this has been confirmed by Bob's story. Smigel carried out a research project to determine how the size of a victim organisation, (small business, large business and government) determined their attitude towards stealing. "If obliged to choose, most individuals would prefer to steal from, and be more approving of others stealing from, large-scale, impersonal rather than from small-scale, personal organisations" (Smigel, 1970, p15). This was confirmed by Bob when he stated part of his justification for falsifying his travel expenses claim in his story:

> It's the accepted norm now not to be too outrageous and because S are in the UK its expenses are coming to something like £1 million a year it gets lost in the scheme of things and it's not traceable, really, and no-one ever questions it (Bob).

If one is faced with a moral dilemma in a work situation, where might the conflicts lie? Trevino (1986) identifies the two influences of individual and organisational when she devised a model for the process of taking a moral decision in the workplace. Under individual influence, she refers to ego strength, field dependence and locus of control, as well as the individual's stage of moral development (Kohlberg). In organisational influences, she includes those relating to the particular job situation, the organisational culture (normative structure, referent others, obedience to authority, responsibility for consequences) and the characteristics of the work (the duties of the role which might include the resolution of moral conflicts).

In order to illuminate further the potential for conflict which appears to be inherent in the employer/employee relationship, sections later in this chapter will consider what an individual brings to an organisation, the role of emotions in organisations, the justifications for unethical behaviour in organisations and alternative ways of resolving moral conflicts. The following quotation very adequately summarises the problem.

If one's identification with both one's job and one's home life is significant, then it is plausible to hold that following rules in one sphere that one cannot follow in the other is not just a psychological problem but a moral one, since one cannot occupy both spheres with integrity, and integrity may be part of living life honestly or flourishingly - where both honesty and flourishing have moral content. (Sorell, 1998, p23)

Leo's story is a good example of these tensions.

7. Leo's story

Leo worked in a small private company as a manager. It was generally felt amongst staff that the current managing director was not making the correct decisions, particularly in relation to redundancies within certain sections. Leo was approached by a colleague who he also counted as a friend to join him in taking industrial action in protest. However, Leo was also concerned about the effect of doing so on his career and family while, at the same time, he wanted to support a friend to whom he had offered help in the past.

Leo identified three sources of influence within his cognitive map: "personal view", "hierarchy pressure" and "peer pressure". I have coded the first two influences as "individual values" and "organisational influence" respectively. At the same time, I have recognised that "peer pressure" is an influence from within the employing organisation (one construct *Most managers had not backed him*).

In interview, Leo not only gave his perceived sources of influence but also their relative strength, either for or against the decision not to back his colleague. When these relative forces are added up (from a total of 11 constructs), one is left with a total of +1 for those influences internal to the organisation and -1 from his individual values. This, then, is a dilemma within the definition previously offered in Chapter Five when the nature of decisions and dilemmas was examined. It demonstrates the fine balance

between what the organisation is telling him to do and what he wants to do as an individual. In his situation, he follows the organisational influence in making a decision not to back his colleague.

8. The influence of the organisation on the project's informants

Fifty-five concepts which were shared and identified as originating from organisational sources were sub-coded as follows:

	per cent
Power of management	31
Organisational values	24
Management issues	20
Fear for career prospects	13
Relationships of power within the organisation	13

(a) The strength of the organisational influence

Before considering the strength of the organisational influence, it is helpful to examine the work of Stanley Milgram on obedience to authority. Milgram (1965; 1974) seeks to establish the necessary conditions for an individual to deliberately cause pain to another individual while following orders from a third party in authority, in other words, actions particularly common in war crimes. Using a laboratory-based experimental procedure, involving the simulation of shock treatment to learners who failed to learn under instruction from an authority, research subjects surprised Milgram and his associates by their willingness to obey and to deliver "harsh" treatment upon instruction to do so. However, this was tempered by the degree of proximity that the subject had to the learner. The closer they were, the less shock they were likely to inflict. Within the results obtained, 62 per cent of all research subjects obeyed fully the instructions of the authority. Milgram concludes as follows:

> A substantial proportion of people do what they are told to do, irrespective of the content of the act and without limitations of

> conscience, so long as they perceive that the command comes from a legitimate authority (Milgram, 1965, p75).

Milgram (1974) refers to the same experiments as in his earlier work. He introduces the concept of "agency" being that state of an individual where she becomes the agent of an authority without reference to her own values. He quotes research subjects as saying "I wouldn't have done it by myself. I was just doing what I was told" (Milgram, 1974, p8).

Milgram's work has been criticised on four fronts (Blass, 2000). The first relates to the nature of the authority. Is it seen as a legitimate authority or is it, rather, an expert authority? Blass suggests that the expertise of the director of the experiments led to obedience using an authority different to that of, say, a dictator. Secondly, the question is raised of the apparently dramatic inability of people to predict the level of obedience which would be demonstrated within the experiments. For example, one group of academics predicted an obedience rate of 1.2%. Was the result of the experiment pure destructive obedience or was it a more well-meaning compliance based on participants' trust in the experimenter? Blass concludes that the two approaches here are not incompatible by suggesting a comparison with employees working on unsafe products in the belief that their employer could not be risking its consumers just to make a profit. The third issue on which Milgram is criticised is that of whether there is a gender difference in the propensity to obey authority. While Milgram conducted very few experiments involving women, those he did showed no difference. Blass demonstrates that within ten studies, nine showed no difference. The final area of contention raises the question of whether obedience rates have changed in the thirty years since Milgram's work. Blass suggests that rates should decrease with increased awareness of the potential effects of obedience. However, he replicated some of Milgram's experiments and obtained the same results.

> Being enlightened about the unexpected power of authority may help a person stay away from an authority-dominated situation, but once he

> or she is *already* in such a situation, knowledge of the drastic degree of obedience authorities are capable of eliciting does not necessarily help free the individual from the grip of the forces operating in that concrete situation, (i.e. to defy the authority to charge). (Blass, 2000, p53, original emphasis).

Given Blass's success in replicating Milgram's results, we are left with the reminder of the strength of the forces within the power relationship between authority figure and person subject to that authority. It also demonstrates the way in which this can over-ride an individual's otherwise normal propensity to behave in accordance with the moral requirements of their social and historical situation.

Returning to the informants' cognitive maps, an analysis was made around the distinction between organisational influences being in theory stronger and those which actually prevailed. One did not lead to the other in two cases (Angela and Joanne). These were both dilemmas and they both went in opposite directions between theory and practice between individual and organisational influences. In other words, the total sum of the strength of the influences indicated prevalence of individual values in one case and organisational influences in the other. Yet, both followed in practice the negative influence on the decision. At this point, there are two possibilities as to why this happened. Firstly, I would raise a caveat against the dangers of taking the relative strengths of the influences as identified by the informants themselves too literally. The arithmetic of the strengths of the influences is helpful but may not stand up to close scrutiny. Secondly, even if the assessment of the influences by the informants is correct, it only serves to confirm the complexity of the decision-making process in terms of its spontaneity and illusiveness.

However, it is clear that the relationship between an individual and the organisation in which they work is critical in nature. It is also apparent from the dilemmas that the harder a decision is to make, the closer the balance between organisational and individual influences. There is also a relation

between a person's level of moral reasoning and their propensity to be influenced to a greater extent by their own values, rather than those of their employer.

(b) The individual in the organisation

A previous chapter has outlined some of the factors around the way an individual faces a moral dilemma. From within a quantitative framework, they include aspects of personality and stage of moral development. Some work has been done in terms of considering the effect of both these aspects when the individual is faced with moral conflict in organisations and this will be summarised in this section. First, consideration is needed of the effect that placing an individual within an employing organisation might have. She is there by duty, to earn the salary or wages that she is contracted to receive. The relationship is governed by a legal contract and there is an underpinning commitment of loyalty to the employer which includes confidentiality and an obedience to the authority to which she is responsible, whether it be a line manager or the head of the organisation. She is expected to behave in certain ways in the performance of her duties, in line with any code of practice or specific instruction. In addition, she might be committed to her work, believing it to be of an intrinsic value to society. What happens when she is instructed to do something which she believes is wrong, either in terms of competence or because there is a moral element involved which makes her unhappy to collude with the practice being suggested? She can look for another job, she can hand in her notice immediately, but the financial consequences of the latter might well mean problems with keeping up with the mortgage. What is at issue here is a question of power and the way that an organisation imposes its authority upon its members. While it can be argued that an individual always retains the capacity to choose one action which might be considered to be more ethical than another, the constraints of working within an organisation with its own sets of rules and procedures are strong and powerful. Could an action be supported if it was totally unethical but done to preserve the welfare of the individual's family by keeping her job and consequent income? The power of the organisation within the

employer/employee relationship has sometimes been overlooked. Marxist theory and feminist theory serve to support this but give little prescription to the individual within that relationship except to say that there is an unequal power relationship present. In the work context, most organisations are hierarchical which, by their very nature, imposes a structure of power on individuals working within them. In his later writing, Foucault recommends a form of self re-modelling in relation to the power situation, maintaining that it is possible for us to consider change in our perspectives on life which have the potential to re-align the relationships of power. Thus, such relationships are worked out on an individual basis and he has no prescription for structural change or any particular ethical practice. This concept is summarised by Brewis thus:

> To conceptualise power as Foucault does allows us to resist, as individuals working against the effects of power in our own lives, in a way that insisting on power as structural (and the corollary of global ethical projects, such as those suggested by the established workplace feminisms) does not (Brewis, 1998, p65).

However such power relationships are worked out existentially, it is a significant factor within any employer/employee relationship. Turning to the project's informants, this is confirmed in practice. Thirteen per cent of the concepts relating to organisational influences concerned the power relationship between the individual and the organisation. Examples of these are:

> *Powerless to influence situation on own* (Edith)
> *Restructuring will happen anyway* (Mark)
> *Need to give report to someone more influential* (Edith).

These were all concepts which influenced a moral decision where the individual appeared to express the limitations of their power within the situation and in comparison to the overall context within their employing organisation. They indicate a pragmatic realism about the nature of the

relationships of power, together with an implied desire to rectify a potential injustice despite the imbalance of relative power for the individual involved.

What is the relationship, if any, between an individual's stage of moral development and their moral reasoning within a work context? Mason and Mudrack (1997) conclude that individuals who are reasoning at a higher stage of moral development are more likely to come into stronger conflict with organisational norms of putting organisation interests before those of society. However, Carpendale and Krebs (1995) maintain that while Kohlberg's stages of moral development may stand, there are a number of variables which affect the stage which is adopted within different contexts. These variables include the type of moral dilemma (business versus philosophical, for example), and the social context. While the research methods employed are questionable in that they depended on the "scoring" of hypothetical dilemmas, they confirm their own previous finding that individuals in business contexts tend to reason morally at the level of Kohlberg's Stage 2, using justifications for principles such as "You shouldn't tell them anything because you have a right to make a profit". Thus, Carpendale and Krebs suggest that individuals might adapt their own moral values according to the context within which they find themselves. In Chapter Six, I explored the possibility that informants were choosing to use a K-stage of moral argument appropriate to the situation in which they found themselves and found little evidence of this. As a result, it would not be possible to argue that being part of a business organisation influences an individual to reason around a moral judgement at a lower K-stage than their ability.

(c) Emotions in organisations

Any individual confronting a potential conflict between two differing sets of values is going to *feel* a range of emotions but, at the same time, she could be in a situation in employment where her employers prescribe emotions to be displayed within her job role. At a fairly basic level, as consumers, we do not much like coming across a "grumpy" service provider such as a ticket collector or a shop assistant. It is expected in their role that they should at the

very least be polite if not cheerful. Previous reference has been made to the role of emotions within life as an employee making moral decisions but what is the influence on such emotions from organisations? Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* published in 1983 has become a key work on this subject. She focuses on the need within service industries for organisations to train employees to "manage" their emotions in a particular way. By example, she examines the training of airline staff in enabling them to smile and remain cheerful despite difficult or aggressive passengers. She maintains that the way a company wants an employee to feel can successfully transmute to the employee adopting the emotions felt as their own. However, this is not always the case, creating a tension between the acted emotions and the actual emotions within an individual very clearly demonstrated from this quotation from a member of Delta Airline staff.

> "I guess it was on a flight when a lady spat at me that I decided I'd had enough. I tried. God knows, I tried my damnedest. I went along with the program, I was being genuinely nice to people. But it didn't work. I reject what the company wants from me emotionally. The company wants me to bring the emotional part of me to work. I won't." (Hochschild, 1983, p128)

Hochschild points to the stress caused by the "task of managing an estrangement between self and feeling and between self and display" (Hochschild, 1983, p131). Workers tend to develop a number of "selves", in particular, the home "self" and the work "self", recognizing that both identities are meaningful but separate, thereby emphasizing the potential conflict between organisation and individual.

The messages coming from an organisation concerning appropriate and inappropriate emotions can be found both in overt methods such as training programmes and more subtle communication from those such as leaders in organisations, leading by example and reward. The role of emotions and feelings in organisations is identified as being an essential part of the

constraints placed upon individuals within a particular social grouping (Fineman, 1993). They provide a form of social control on behaviour.

However, within organisations, it is recognised that negative emotions have been traditionally treated as being an element of individual behaviour to be discouraged; a sign of weakness, an indication of a lack of objectivity, a move away from a logical approach to decision making (Putnam and Mumby, 1993). Emotion has been portrayed as a value-laden concept which is inappropriate for the assumed rationality within organisations.

If emotions are seen as a part of the social constraints within organisations, what effect do they have on individuals' moral decision making within the organisational context? It is suggested that the role of emotions is particularly significant and that they can be seen as a product of values which dictate appropriate and inappropriate emotions (Fineman, 1993). However, if emotions are also considered to be spontaneous and reflective, it is unlikely that all feelings can be deemed to be value-driven. This would have the effect of pushing the concept into a rational, logical, process which, by its very nature, it is clearly not.

In a recent study by Gaudine and Thorne (2001) it is argued that emotions should be viewed as a positive influence on moral decision-making in organisations and an attempt is made to relate the influence of emotions to the four-stage process of moral decision-making identified by Rest. They refer to the association of positive affect and arousal with the likelihood of an individual being sensitive to the existence of a moral dilemma (Isen, 1997) but acknowledge that more work needs to be done around the effect of negative emotions on moral decisions. Positive emotions are identified with the enhancement of an individual's propensity for acting ethically through the moral decision-making process but they are again unclear about the effect of negative emotions. This study reflects a quantitative perspective of attempting to impose a logic or pattern to a process which appears not to be consequential or logical.

Two further articles help to shed light on aspects of the emotional factor around working in organisations. Putnam and Mumby (1993) refer to the duality between rationality and emotions within organisations and they conclude that this has a particular effect on moral behaviour. They link the duality between rationality and emotions to the prevalence within Western culture to promote rationality and eschew emotive influences while the concept of bureaucracy and its implied rationality is seen as taking over emotional labour and rationalising it for the purpose of the organisation. They make the point that sharing emotions ("work feelings") encourages and builds a sense of community but they take a moral stance in asserting that work feelings should be allowed to emerge and be recognised without prescription from authority.

From the above literature, a picture can be drawn of powerful organisations attempting to control not only employees' actions but also their emotions (Hochschild's concept of "emotional labour"). A clear example of how organisations can influence employees' emotions is provided by Helen's story. She was obviously under a great deal of pressure, firstly, to be seen to be supporting her manager and, secondly, despite her treatment of her, to try as hard as for previous collections in raising money for a leaving present. She felt she had to decide how she should behave when she was doing the collection and how much time she should put aside for it while, at the same time, asking herself the question *Do I want to do it at all?* (Helen).

I have previously commented on the apparent lack of emotional content within the informants' narratives and speculated as to the reason for this. It could be argued that the informants were complying with a culture that saw emotions as non-rational and therefore unacceptable as they told their story. It was only when we began to explore actual *thoughts* that the emotions within the situation appeared.

(d) Unethical behaviour in organisations

We have already seen one suggestion for the rationalisation of unethical behaviour being an ethical cynicism which denied individual responsibility in the situation. A number of writers have focussed on the reasons and "justifications" for unethical behaviour within organisations. Kelman and Hamilton, for example, define crimes of obedience as being "an act performed in response to orders from authority that is considered illegal or immoral by the larger community" (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989, p46). They can range in scope from mass genocide to the Watergate affair. They identify crimes of obedience as being unique in arising from a conflict of duties: the duty to obey and the duty to disobey.

Gellerman identifies four commonly-held rationalisations for managers performing unethical actions on behalf of their company.

1. A belief that "really" the action is acceptable ethically.
2. A belief that the action is in the individual's or corporation's best interests.
3. A belief that the action is "safe" because it will never be discovered.
4. A belief that "because the activity helps the company the company will condone it and even protect the person who engages in it" (Gellerman, 1986, p88).

Colin's story can be described as involving a "crime of obedience". Colin was faced with a situation where he was being encouraged by his employers to go out and negotiate what he knew to be an illegal compensation payment from a contracting company which had gone into liquidation overnight and set up as a new company, leaving the debts of the business behind in the old company. His "personal values" were saying

It's illegal

Attitude of contractor showed no concern for actions – pre-planned

Lots of other creditors without same opportunity that would have done the same thing.

His "own organisation" was saying

Not sure what would happen if refused
MD thought a good idea
Had happened before – expected norm/industry standard
New with company.

The total strength of the organisational influences far outweighed others in favour of negotiating the payment and that is what he did. This would appear to be an example of a situation where the power of the organisation is used to push an employee into an illegal act.

The informants provide two further situations which describe a behaviour which most people would agree would be against normal organisational rules and conventions. Bob is clear that he is cheating in claiming his car expenses on a monthly basis. Edith decided to send a politically sensitive confidential report to a party who would not have otherwise seen it. How do they justify these actions?

Bob is honest about his reasons for his actions; he cites the taxation system and fact that he believes it to be the "norm" that individual employees within the organisation with company cars regularly overclaim on business miles in order to cover private mileage. His justifications imply the fact that he is not alone in doing this. Edith uses the word "betrayal" in two key strong concepts:

Felt loyalty to organisation being betrayed
Felt colleagues being betrayed.

Thus, she justified her action through loyalty to her colleagues and in a belief that her decision to send the report out was in the best interest of her employing organisation.

(e) Resolution of the conflict

Taking a quantitative perspective on this subject, work has been carried out on a number of psychological factors which might cause conflict between employee and employer. For example, personality types such as "High-Machiavellian" (characterised by a strong sense of self-interest), strong adherents of the Protestant work-ethic and those who had an external locus of control were all found to be more willing to bend rules to serve the requirements of their employing organisation (Mudrack and Mason, 1996). In another study, Sims and Keon (1997) considered the nature of person and organisation "fit" and found that individuals are attracted to organisations whose value systems best reflect their own, employees are best satisfied with their employment where the ethical climates are similar and that individuals show the greatest commitment where organisations are similarly committed.

Similarly, there is some evidence that individuals develop coping strategies for dealing with conflicts between their personal values and the perceived organisational codes. Lovell (2002) reports that in two-thirds of the sample of cases they examined, informants had resolved their personal conflict through taking a stance of ethical cynicism involving convincing themselves that resolution of the problem was not their responsibility but that of others. I found no evidence of such a strategy being used by this project's informants. They were very clear that they *owned* the decision which they brought to the interview.

I conclude this section by considering two writers who have attempted to highlight possible resolutions of the potential conflict between employee and employing organisation, or, alternatively, reasons for the conflict's existence as a light on its potential removal. Schein outlines the differing stakeholders to which a business manager has responsibilities in his or her role. They

include the individual and his or her profession, the boss, the peer, the organisation, the stockholder, the customer, the consumer, the country and the subordinate or employee. He concludes that this very number means that, firstly, there is no overall guidance on prioritising within this list and, secondly, "we cannot specify a single set of values and moral behaviours for the manager. The search for such a single value system is doomed to failure until we define to whom we ultimately want the manager to be responsible" (Schein, 1971, p549). If one applies a consequentialist approach to the context as perceived by Schein, it would be difficult to prioritise "benefit". Similarly, a deontological argument would hit like problems – to whom does one owe first duty?

De George attempts to resolve this problem by effectively removing it from the individual. He argues that a number of levels have been defined within the field of business ethics. He lists them as being "the level of the individual, the level of the firm or corporation, the level of the industry or of other groups of firms, the national level, and the international level" (De George, 1990, p27). He seeks to show that a true ethical dilemma (that is, one for which there would appear to be no truly ethical solution) for an individual in an organisation can be caused by what he calls *ethical displacement*. Ethical displacement is caused when the solution to the problem can be found through another *ethical level*. For example, the resolution of an individual's moral dilemma may be found in changing a corporation's structure at another level. This argument leaves unresolved what an individual might do in practice when faced with a conflict. It is often not practical to start trying to influence an organisation at a higher level than oneself, particularly in the short term.

Sorell identifies the potential conflict between an individual's home life and their business life as highlighted earlier in this chapter. He relates this back to the tension between the concepts of business and ethics where it is implied that business may not be able to be as ethical as might be desired because of its very nature (Carr, 1993). He considers the possibility of keeping them separate and recognises that both virtue theory and utilitarianism are able to

justify the compartmentalising of business and "personal" but concludes with a philosophical resolution of the conflict through stakeholder theory.

None of the above proposals offer a practical solution to the potential conflict between employer and employee and, indeed, that is part of the essence of the conflict itself. When one turns to the experience of 16 individuals, it is helpful to consider the nature of the six identified dilemmas to explore how they resolved their situation. In four of the six dilemmas, adding up strength of influences which were internal to the organisation on the one hand, and external influences on the other, the results indicated a near balance with an exact balance in Leo's situation (see table below).

	Int/ext to org	**Total score**
Angela	-4/3	-1
Frederick	1/1	2
Joanne	5/-7	-2
Leo	1/-1	0
Mark	4/-10	-6
Owen	0/-1	-1

Values internal to the organisation prevailed in three of the dilemmas with one balanced and one against the organisation. In the sixth dilemma (CC), the conflict was between individual values and those of the union (peer/group external to organisation). In the latter, individual values prevailed. I have previously referred to the inherent dangers in reading too much of significance into the arithmetic around the strengths of influence. There appears to be no generalisable pattern on the above basis.

However, there is one particular type of conflict which has now been recognised in law. Its colloquial name is "whistleblowing" and it is an example of the ultimate resolution of tension between employee values and employer demands.

9. Whistleblowing

"Whistleblowing" is a comparatively recent term which has become part of the vernacular language outside that of business ethics. Perry (1998) takes a fairly narrow definition in terms of referring exclusively to "external" whistleblowing: "the process by which insiders 'go public' with their claims of malpractices by, or within, powerful organisations" (Perry, 1998, p1). Near and Miceli have contributed the most of all academic writers to the subject (Near and Miceli, 1995; Near and Miceli, 1996; Miceli and Near, 1994). They offer the following definition of whistleblowing: "the disclosure by organisation members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organisations that may be able to effect action" (Near and Miceli, 1996, p2). They describe the actions of a whistleblower as reflecting two variables. The first relates to personal variables which tell her to believe that whistle-blowing behaviour is appropriate and the second to situational variables that cause her to believe that it is warranted.

Perry (1998) refers to the strengths of rituals and rites within the organisation and concludes that whistleblowers are the equivalent of heretics – "a challenge to the prevailing symbolic order and through it to the social order itself. The unclothed emperor may be deviant, but it is heretical to say as much in public" (Perry, 1998, p16).

It is clear that whistleblowing involves disobedience and disloyalty to the organisation involved (Jubb, 1999), thereby theoretically breaking the contract between employer and employee as described previously. In the UK, there is now some protection for employees who divulge confidential organisational information around particular issues to enforcing authorities in the interest of the public through the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The concept of whistleblowing illustrates the severity of the conflict that can exist between employer and employee values and the resultant, often desperate, measures which can be taken in an attempt by the employee to

draw attention to the "unethical" behaviour of the employer. In terms of this project's informants, Edith's actions, in terms of informing someone about a confidential paper, were very close to "whistleblowing".

10. Restructuring: the common context for Mark, Neil and Owen

There is a need to analyse any common factors which emerged from the three situations shared by Mark, Neil and Owen. They were employed by the same organisation and identified decisions to talk about which came from the historical context of restructuring the department of which they were members. Two of the informants (Mark and Owen) were involved within a union capacity, as a result of which both indicated a willingness to follow a nationally laid down policy although not without question. Owen did not identify any organisational influence within the context of the decision. The only common factor identifiable between all three informants is that both Mark and Neil were saying "it is right to treat all employees equally and equitably". It is apparent from the above that three informants from one particular context are not enough to be able to generalise in any constructive way

11. More background information on the project's informants

Before drawing any general conclusions from the above experiences of 16 informants, it is helpful to outline a little background information about them and to consider whether any other organisational factors have influenced them.

(a) Type of employer

Private sector	4
Education (HE or FE)	7
Local authority	3
Public sector (other)	2

Organisational values prevailed with 75 per cent (three) of the private sector employees while the fourth informant was neutral on this. This raises the question of whether these employees were concerned in particular about job security. Up until fairly recently, it has been generally perceived that job security is less high within the private as opposed to the public sector. All four private sector employees (Bob, Colin, Helen and Leo) expressed general concern around career prospects and status. Thus, Bob's organisational influences in relation to his monthly decision to "cheat" on his travel claims pertained to status within the organisation.

> *Perception that commercial staff have larger cars and more opportunity to boost mileage*
> *Need to justify having car for business*
> *A way of equalling imbalance in reward and recognition and status between commercial and manufacturing*.

Colin was fairly new in post and was concerned about the repercussions if he did not conform to the requirements of his employer to seek an illegal compensation. Helen was concerned about other people's perceptions of her behaviour within the organisation as she sought donations towards her boss's leaving present and Leo explicitly did not want to risk his career and the welfare of his family in deciding not to support a friend and colleague. It is apparent, therefore, that where employees are concerned about their current or their future job prospects, these concerns are manifested as influences within their moral decisions at work. Where a particular type of employment is more vulnerable to potential redundancies, then it can be expected that such worries appear within moral decisions of employees working in that field.

(b) Length of time with employer

Less than 1 year	1
1 to 5 years	4
6 to 10 years	3
Over 10 years	8

This question was asked within the background information sought because I was looking for a possible relationship between length of time with an employer and a propensity to support organisational values. However, of the seven cases where organisational values prevailed, four were employed for less than five years and three over five years. There would appear therefore to be no relationship. However, 13 per cent of all organisationally influenced concepts related to a fear of effect of decision on job prospects. No informant who expressed such fear had been employed more than five years. Lastly, there was no perceived pattern between the length of time an individual had been with the employer on ethical theory perspective nor on K-stages. This includes Colin's construct relating to his newness with the company.

(c) Length of time in post

< 6 months	1
< 1 year	3
1-5 years	11
6-10 years	1

Again, this question was asked because research has been done on the influence of role within an organisation in relation to length of time in it (Kohlberg, 1984). While Neil referred to his recent promotion into his current post, I could find no relationship between informants' length of time in post and their propensity to favour particular influences.

(d) Nature of employment

Director	1
Manager	9
Professional	2
Executive	4

The nature of employment was coded by me according to level of responsibility, job title and affiliation with a professional body where the informant referred to a professional influence. In fact, both professional informants were employed by local authorities.

Organisational influences prevailed with five of the nine managers and, in addition, a sixth manager was balanced between organisational and individual influences. Both the professionals and the director were K4 or K5 and therefore arguing at a higher level when considering moral issues. Within the total of three individuals (the professionals and the director), two were influenced more strongly by individual sources with the third being balanced with organisational influences. Kohlberg has argued that being in "role" pushes an individual into higher levels of moral argument. Certainly there is a relationship here between higher management and higher K-stages. However, it is impossible to know which influences which. Are individuals appointed to higher status positions because of their ability to argue morally or do the roles influence them to argue at a higher level than they would otherwise do?

12. The influence of society on individuals

However many communities we are members of, we are also members of what is known as our "society". Implied in this is a national perspective with a relationship to the State. Our identity with society in general can also influence an individual's decision-making. Ultimately, society imposes its own values on individual members through sanctions (Durkheim, 1957). At the same time, it is recognised that society can influence organisational values (Schminke, 2001).

Thus, in any moral decision, the parameters will be marked out by the nature of the sanctions and the strength of the "message" coming from society in general. The distinction between society and State needs to be made here in that society relates most closely to one's national identity while the State is a part of that identity acting out (in a true democracy) the corporate will of the

society it serves. While not wishing to embark on a political science debate here, I maintain that the laws of the State provide the final sanctions to many moral judgements. It is a crime to steal property from another and the potential nature of the punishment, depending on the scale involved together with other factors, is known by most.

At the same time, it is possible to identify points at which society's general view of moral issues is changing away from current statute. At the time of writing, two examples of this might be the debates around legalisation of the use of cannabis for medical purposes and the introduction of euthanasia in certain circumstances.

Where do we get our messages from in relation to societal values? I maintain that they come from all aspects of society – the economic context, education, religion, political movements, writers, TV and film "stars", as well as the media. The latter plays a strong lead in influencing us. However, we do have an element of choice as to which media we read, watch or listen to, even though access to it might be restricted due to such factors as levels of literacy and numeracy. In addition, we learn the values which are acceptable within particular groupings within society. For example, support for voluntary repatriation of Asians might be acceptable at meetings of the British National Party but would be abhorrent in most other circles, not least that of the Socialist Workers' Party. Is it possible to identify values of "society" at large? Are they not a collection of disparate and conflicting codes which change, mutate or develop daily according to particular influences? Can they be linked to the laws of the State which might be seen as some kind of backbone from which values devolve? This argument then turns on the possibility of maintaining and supporting universal laws which is debated elsewhere in this thesis.

Thus, there is message coming from society concerning acceptable and unacceptable behaviour but how strong it is within particular circumstances and how uniform is demonstrated by the empirical research with informants.

Three informants identified an influence from society (Angela, Joanne and Ken). In the case of Angela, it was a negative influence and for Joanne and Ken, a positive. Ken's concepts relate to society's values around money and the law in deciding whether to report problems with data to funders (*A lot of money involved*; *Had seen in other orgs money being returned and criminal proceedings*). Joanne's concept refers to the influence of law when she was deciding how much she could inform employees of the effect of their TUPE transfers (*Telling them could not affect the TUPE transfer*). Angela identified the need to appear reasonable when deciding to blame the manager at a disciplinary hearing as coming from society.

There is one time when it would appear in particular that an informant had coded his source of influence incorrectly. This occurs in relation to Bob's reference to UK tax laws being unfair. Another person might code that as originating from society. However, he saw this as reflecting his own individual attitude towards tax laws. From a social constructionist perspective, it is important, and more informing, to respect the informant's assessment of their situation.

Thus, in terms of influences on this project's informants, it has to be concluded that *society* plays a very minor role in these three particular decisions. It is not identified as having any influence within 13 of the informants' cognitive maps.

13. Conclusions

Finally, I wish to summarise the points which have emerged within this chapter. Firstly, it is clear that the nature of the organisational culture appears to relate primarily to expected behaviour, actions and beliefs rather than having any specific moral content. Secondly, a relationship appears between informants in higher management who also reason morally at higher K-stages although it is not clear whether they are influenced by their role to do so or whether they are in that role because they have an ability to use

higher K-stages in moral reasoning. Thirdly, within this group of informants, the influence of *society in general* was non-existent or minimal.

The informants' stories and cognitive maps reflect a realism about the nature of the power relationship that exists between employer and employee, together with, in a number of cases, a determination to ensure that a potentially *unequal* situation is resolved fairly. Further evidence of this power relationship is indicated by the frequency with which informants indicate their concern at any detrimental effect on their careers. Emotions are also present within this relationship and there is evidence that organisations sought to control these, at least in one instance.

However, it is clear that the relationship between an individual and the organisation in which they work is critical in nature. It is also apparent from the dilemmas that the harder a decision is to make, the closer the balance between organisational and individual influences. There is also a relation between a person's level of moral reasoning and their propensity to be influenced to a greater extent by their own values, rather than those of their employer. Certainly those informants arguing at K5 stage of moral development were able to take a more detached view of their situation and able to listen to their own individual values in the situation in which they found themselves. I hesitate to take this argument further because it might lead down the route of K5 stage employees not being "good" employees so far as organisations are concerned in that they might tend to challenge organisational values if they conflicted with their own beliefs. However, other organisations would welcome that quality within an employee.

In conclusion, in examining the nature of the influence of an employing organisation on an employee, what emerges is the diverse nature of organisations and their cultures and the complexity of the relationship between an individual and her employing organisation, together with an awareness of the framework of power around employees which can serve to influence their behaviour and their emotions.

Chapter Ten:

Membership of community: An individual in relation to groups

1. Introduction

Previous chapters have argued that, within theories relating to cognitive moral development, individuals gain their moral values from some form of social contact with other individuals, either in a one-to-one setting or, more usually, a group. The previous chapter offered a definition of an organisation involving a collection of groups. The purpose of this chapter is to review theories of how people in groups behave and what the influence is of a group on its members or adherents in terms of having an impact on an individual's moral values and her moral decision-making process in the workplace. We have now identified individual values, organisational values and society in general as influencing such decisions. Where social interactions have worked to modify existing beliefs or values and, also, served to enhance an individual's ability to reason around moral issues (Kohlberg and Higgins, 1987), much of this has occurred within the context of a *group* of people. It is therefore acknowledged that the influence for change in moral reasoning comes from social interaction. In inquiring into the nature of these sources of influence within a workplace setting, it is necessary to investigate the nature of what it means to be a member of a group of individuals or to seek to become such a member in order to understand more fully the influences which are present in making decisions around moral issues.

Much literature has been written around the *dynamics* of the group *process* and the major works on this will be outlined and explored. Much more literature relates to the practice of working with groups within either a therapeutic, training, educational or business decision-making setting as well as a research context (focus groups). The latter has contributed to a limited extent to psychological theory and reference will be made to it whenever appropriate.

Why do groups form? It would appear that most people have social needs which can only be met by interacting with others (Cartwright and Zander, 1968). For example, many people going through an anxiety-arousing experience would seek comfort in the company of others. This provides them with a group evaluation of their environment and what is happening within it which consolidates their perception of social reality. Similar processes apply with respect to values in that people tend to check their own moral norms against those of respected groups (Scott, 1965; Radloff, 1968).

Finally, Durkheim (1961) makes the point that humans are only moral at the point where they become social beings because morality relates to other people, although environmentalists might argue that, while being a major component of the concept of morality, it can also be extended to include the care and the sustainability of our universe.

This chapter will consider the effect of affiliation with a group on an individual's moral decision-making process. In doing so, it will consider the nature of a group and the processes within it, its development and its resulting cohesiveness which includes the development of norms and what happens if a member is in conflict with the group. In this chapter, I also review literature around research on group influence within business ethics, together with theories relating to being a member of a profession as this is one particular potential source of influence within a business setting before moving on to compare the experiences of the project's informants with the theory expounded. Finally, I consider the question of membership of multiple groups and how that potential conflict is resolved in practice. However, the first question that needs attention is "What is a group?"

2. What is a group?

It is inevitable that that question should be answered in terms of a collection of a number of individuals. The problem which has been addressed by various writers in the past has been whether a number of individuals collected together can ever be anything more than the sum of its parts. Is there such a thing as a "group mind"? Muzafer Sherif (1936) sought to show that the

social environment influences individuals to behave in a different way, modifying behaviour. He carried out a piece of empirical research using the autokinetic effect. Individuals were placed in a dark room and a motionless bright light was shone at them. They were asked to press a key when they saw the light move. The purpose was to establish how individuals operated when they had no frame of reference. The results showed that individuals built up their own frame of reference peculiar to themselves based on their own perceptions and experience and to which they referred in further tests. The tests were repeated in a group situation. This time, when an individual had previously done the test alone, the range began to converge. However, where the tests were done for the first time in a group situation, the convergence was far closer within the group and peculiar to that group. Sherif saw this as confirming the theory that "new and supra-individual qualities arise in the group situations" (Sherif, 1936, p105). Finally, when an individual faced the test having previously undergone it in a group situation, his results fell within the range and norm previously established. In interview after the test, some of Sherif's subjects recognised the influence of discussion within the group while others were unaware of it.

Sherif's work set the scene for the study of group dynamics. Thus Kurt Lewin is able to state with confidence:

> there is no more magic behind the fact that groups have properties of their own, which are different from the properties of their subgroups or their individual members, than behind the fact that molecules have properties, which are different from the properties of the atoms or ions of which they are composed (Lewin, 1947, p8).

This analogy is further used by Rupert Brown (1988) when he refers to the properties of water consisting of the elements of hydrogen and oxygen which, when combined, create something different – a third entity. Lewin expands his thinking on this in a slightly different way when he states:

> The whole is not "more" than the sum of its parts but it has different properties. The statement should be: "The whole is different from the sum of its parts". In other words, there does not exist a superiority of value of the whole. Both whole and parts are equally real. On the other hand, the whole has definite properties of its own (Lewin, 1951, p146).

Having shown that there is such an entity as a group but before going on to define what is meant by a group, it is important to acknowledge that not all activity between individuals takes place within a group setting. Brown refers to the distinction between interpersonal and group activity. He alludes to the situation in Northern Ireland where Catholics and Protestants can work together in harmony as individuals but where, entrenched in their group, different opinions and values proliferate. He distinguishes between personal identity summed up by "I like jazz music" or "I am a friendly sort of person" and social identity "I am a woman" or "I am a member of a sailing club". He sees these as being at two ends of a continuum. Most social situations will contain both interpersonal and group interactions.

There are a number of definitions of the word "group" within available literature (Brown, 1988; Cartwright and Zander, 1968; Hinton and Reitz, 1971; Lewin, 1951). We frequently group individuals together in order to refer to them as having one or several particular characteristics. We categorise them as having common traits. Examples of this might be a classification of people with the same hair colour (redheads) or people who have all passed a first degree (graduates). These tend to relate to collective nouns. So, for example, if one takes the term "racists", this is a collective noun for people with certain beliefs rather than referring to a group of individuals in the sense that is meant by the term "groups". In using the term groups within the context of the psychology of groups, we imply that much more is involved in membership. Rupert Brown offers the following definition: "A group exists when two or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence is recognised by at least one other" (Brown, 1988, pp 2-3). This "third party" would be some person or group of

people which does not so define itself in the same way. This would appear to be sufficient at first glance but when we begin to consider the nature and structure of groups and members' motivation for joining where joining is appropriate, the above definition then becomes a little simplistic as it fails to take into account the multitudinous reasons for groups of individuals coming together. Hinton and Reitz touch on the need for a broader definition when they write of groups satisfying individuals' needs, including affiliative needs, social needs, security needs and power achievement needs. They state that "they also provide a medium by which an individual can test his perception of, and if need be actually create, reality" (Hinton and Reitz, 1971, p32).

This theme of groups fulfilling their members' needs is best reflected within Kurt Lewin's definition which relates to the *interdependence* of its members rather than a similarity between them (Lewin, 1951). The latter type of definition might include a shared goal but he argues that the shared goal is a symbol of one aspect of their interdependence. "The kind of interdependence of the members (what holds the group together) is equally as important a characteristic of a group as the degree of their interdependence and the group structure" (Lewin, 1951, p148).

Cartwright and Zander draw from Lewin's definition and expand on it, offering the following:

> A group is a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree" (Cartwright and Zander, 1968, p46).

The type of interdependence may be a form of interaction or shared norms or the reception of a reward (psychological) in being a member – they get "something out of it". It can also be a shared goal or it may be defined in terms of the perceptions of the group's members as being a recognised collective. From these definitions, they draw out such characteristics as group members having frequent contact with each other, recognising themselves as members and being so recognised by others, sharing common

attitudes to matters of common interest, participating in recognisable specific roles, sharing goals with other members and seeing themselves as being a collective unity which can be identified by others outside the group environment as such. This last definition appears to be the most appropriate, embracing, as it does, the diverse nature of groups but recognising the interrelationships and interdependence of their members.

(a) Membership v reference groups

The above definitions very much relate to identifiable groups of which individuals would claim *membership*. The word "group" can also be used to signify a collection of individuals who might not be so interdependent but who might be *similar* in other qualities, for example, "bikers" whose only link together might be the ownership of a motor bike. If an individual aspired to become a biker, she might not be able to afford to buy a motor bike but would be seeking in other ways to behave according to her perceptions of what it means to be a biker, for example, beliefs or style of dress. Thus the group of bikers becomes that individual's *reference* group. Reference groups can also be groups that an individual uses to compare his or her behaviour to. Their perceived standards or norms are used by an individual to judge his or her own behaviour with either a positive or negative result, in other words, as an assessment that it either conforms or does not conform to the reference group's perceived standards. The influence on individuals of reference groups as well as membership groups is significant and will be considered later in this chapter.

(b) Norms and values

In Chapter Eight I offered a definition of the term 'values' as relating to the desirability of a particular mode of conduct or end state of behaviour. The word "norm" is used extensively throughout the literature relating to group dynamics and, for example, Cartwright and Zander (1968) refer to common *norms* as being a fundamental characteristic of a membership group. However, it is used differently by different writers and it is therefore

important to consider a working definition of the word at this stage for the purposes of this project.

Josephine Klein defines norms as follows:

> When in a group a man will consider his actions with respect to others in the group. He learns to conform to their expectations and so to their way of life. Their ways have value for the individual, he may make them his own, internalise them and therefore conform to them. Or they may be experienced as external pressures to which he must yield to gain other ends. Such pressures, whether internalised or not, we are calling norms (Klein, 1956, p77).

As an indication of the problem of definition, Brown's definition of a norm is as follows: "a scale of values which defines a range of acceptable (and unacceptable) attitudes and behaviours for members of a social unit" (Brown, 1988, p42).

Johnson and Johnson offer this description of group norms:

> ...The group's common beliefs regarding appropriate behaviour, attitudes, and perceptions for members. They are the prescribed modes of conduct and belief that not only guide the behaviour of group members, but also help group interaction by specifying the kinds of responses that are expected and acceptable in particular situations (Johnson and Johnson, 1997, p21).

Sherif initially appears confused about any differentiation between norms and values and uses the words virtually synonymously. Social norms include "customs, traditions, standards, rules, values, fashions, and all other criteria of conduct which are standardised as a consequence of the contact of individuals" (Sherif, 1936, p3). However, he begins to differentiate when he considers a definition of social values which he defines through the examples of "the glory of the flag, the value of a diamond, the sweetness of home, the sanctity of property and the sacredness of the constitution" (Sherif, 1936, p113). Thus, according to Sherif, social values are social norms with an

element of value judgement. He sees social values as affecting the *attitude* of an individual. Social values may start within one individual member of a group but they have to become standardised within a potentially critical group. They become internalised within individual group members and become their frame of reference for attitudes. Sherif makes no differentiation between social values and moral values.

Is it possible to distinguish between norms and values? Johnson gives us the clearest distinction between the two when he describes them as follows: "Norms can be defined as the general expectations of a demand character for all role members of an organisation. Values are the more generalised ideological justifications and aspirations of the organisation" (Johnson, 1970, p26). However, he makes no distinction between norms and *rules*. It is therefore clear that working definitions need to be devised for the sake of clarity.

While norms and values are mentioned a great deal by writers on group processes, less is said about *rules* and it is the use of rules which puts a clearer perspective on the relationship between rules, norms and values. I would argue that rules are *underpinned* by values to which it is hoped (by the rule makers) that people will aspire. A norm would reflect what happens *in reality* and *on average* thus reflecting its alternative interpretation of being a mean or average of what happens in practice. This theory is best amplified by example.

Value:	It is wrong to steal from your employer
Rule:	Do not steal postage stamps from company stocks
Norm:	It's OK to take a few stamps for personal use as long as it is not so many as to risk being discovered.

As an alternative example, it was written in my terms and conditions of employment (a national standard) that every member of staff should take a half hour lunch break. In practice, this did not happen locally as everyone was employed part-time and was carrying a heavy workload. The

relationship between the rule, underpinning value and the norm was therefore as follows:

Value:	It is good for the welfare of employees to take a break during the working day
Rule:	Every employee must take a lunch break of half an hour
Norm:	No-one takes a lunch break because everyone works part-time, carries a heavy workload and wants to go home half an hour earlier.

Thus, it is intended to adopt the following three definitions within this piece of work. Norms are described as being a guideline or standard relating to acceptable or unacceptable *behaviour* within a group. They may relate to rules for procedure of discussion (for example, a written constitution) or they may proscribe certain social behaviour, for example, eating pork.

Values are principles and beliefs that serve to underpin a set of group rules and goals. Thus, for example, "All political prisoners should be freed" would be a value of a local group of Amnesty and would justify the specific task of writing letters to governments on behalf of imprisoned individuals towards the specific goal of freeing all political prisoners. They have a "moral" element to them and thus have an important role to play in the influencing of individual members of the group. Rules are the specific consequence of the values and principles. For example, a local Amnesty group might have a rule that each member is required to write at least three letters per week in relation to the rights of political prisoners. There is no moral element in that rule per se but that it is *underpinned* by the value accepted by all members of the group.

In order to investigate the nature of the influence of group membership, the processes within a group which take place will be considered next, followed by the nature of an individual's influence on a group and the group's influence on the individual. I will then seek to outline current research in

business ethics on group influence and theory relating to membership of a profession.

3. The processes within a group

Kurt Lewin introduces his field theory as being "a method of analysing causal relations and of building scientific constructs" (Lewin, 1951, p45). It recognises that in any process a number of variables are at work, a change in any of which would alter the outcome. It also recognises the fact that they are interdependent and interrelational. Earlier, in 1947, Lewin had used this theory to consider the forces working in opposition on groups to gain knowledge of the dynamics within the group. Thus, he attempted to quantify the relative strength of the various forces for change on groups. He recognised the forces on an individual who might hold different beliefs to those of the group to conform to its standards. Not to do so would mean that the individual might suffer ridicule, sanction, or rejection. Would the forces for change be stronger than those for conformity?

It can be seen that there are a number of different variables within a membership group (at least as many as the sum of its members) which ensure that a group functions in a particular way. Consideration will be given in the next section to the question of how a group develops and two concepts referred to a great deal in any study of group dynamics – cohesiveness and conformity. In selecting literature to review at this point, the main interest is in the role of norms, the way they develop and the means by which they influence individual group members.

(a) The development of groups

Norms have a significant role to play within the development of groups but at a later stage of the life of a group. In the beginning of a group, Hinton and Reitz state that membership groups form in two different ways, either spontaneously or deliberately (Hinton and Reitz, 1971). According to them, spontaneous groups tend to be less formal and more social while groups

which are planned have more structure with a more autocratic style of leadership. How do groups agree their norms? It is part of the process of development according to Bruce Tuckman (1971). He analyses the development of small groups in terms of a series of stages (Tuckman, 1971, pp 76-77). He identifies the following stages relating to group structure.

Stage 1 "Testing and dependence": Members tend to be more dependent on the group which tends to have fairly rigid norms while individuals test out roles and boundaries – to join or not to join?

Stage 2 "Intragroup hostility": Groups pass through an early stage of conflict and this tends to feature the testing of autonomy and independence of individual members.

Stage 3 "Development of group cohesion": this includes discovering common interests, the growth of an interlocking network of friendships, role independence, mutual involvement between members with a concomitant increase in harmony, and the establishment of group norms for dealing with areas such as discipline.

Stage 4 "Functional Role-Relatedness": this is a stage which reflects a mutual interdependence of members "a simultaneous autonomy and mutuality" where the structure has been internalised.

Writing as a practitioner, working with small groups in the voluntary sector, this translates into more colloquial language as "forming, storming, norming and performing" and is taught as such in any learning setting on the psychology of groups. Tuckman's Stage 3 summarises the concept of cohesiveness to include the agreement of group norms which, in turn, dictate acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within a group.

(b) Cohesiveness

The above description of a development model of the group process indicates the importance of the strength of cohesion within a group membership. Various writers have considered the nature of this cohesion and the factors which affect its relative force. Thus Hinton and Reitz (1971) argue that the strength of cohesiveness depends on the strength of the group's goals but that

there has to be some element of cohesiveness or mutual attractiveness for the group to exist at all.

Two sets of component forces have been recognised as acting on group members – those which attract the individual and those deriving from the attractiveness of alternative memberships (Cartwright, 1968). Some of the possible consequences of strong group cohesiveness include the ability of the group to retain its members, the power of the group to influence its members, the degree of participation and loyalty of members and, lastly, the feelings of security on the part of members.

The need for shared values which underpin the cohesion of a group has been identified, together with the shared perspective inducing members to be motivated to do that which, if not done, might incur sanctions (Scott, 1965). Shared values also limit the amount of intra-group conflict. They prescribe priorities among goals and set standards of appropriateness for selecting means to attain the goals. Shared values also justify sanctions against those who deviate while reference to the group's collective moral values steers feelings in members of guilt or self-righteousness, enabling them to judge themselves against the requirements of the group.

Thus it can be seen that a number of factors work towards a group functioning effectively and in a cohesive way. One of the major forces within that process is the need for members of the group to conform to its agreed standards and goals. What does this mean in practice?

(c) Conformity to norms

The effects of conformity and the existence of a set of group standards are interdependent. Johnson (1970) recognises the significance of norms in the need for conformity within the group. He sees norms as having the general function of tying members of the group into the system and its various roles.

> Power accrues, therefore, to norms because the people involved give up some of their individual power to the norms. Individuals allow themselves to be influenced by norms in ways in which they would

> never allow themselves to be influenced by other people, as norms often assume the characteristics of moral obligations (Johnson, 1970, p213).

He describes norms as being of relative significance within the system, those which are less important attracting fewer sanctions than those which are more significant. Thus conformity is ensured on the norms which are more fundamental to the group's goals. However, Johnson makes the point that the degree of conformity given by the individual will depend on whether the group is also a reference group of that person in a positive framework, there being more incentive to conform if there is strong motivation to adhere to the identified norms of the reference group.

How does the individual learn the group's norms? Brown (1988) relates this process to the observed behaviour of his child joining a nursery class for the first time. The new children spend some time watching the others to see what they are doing. They are encouraged by the others to join existing activities rather than impose new ones. Klein describes the individual as attempting to learn the norms of a group in order to seek their approval (Klein, 1956). This is done by observation of "average" behaviour which is then imitated. Where an individual is uncertain of the acceptable way to behave, they will be influenced by information supplied by the group. She holds that the greater the uncertainty, the more likely the individual is to aim to conform to an estimate of the group's average.

It is generally recognised that there is a process of socialisation which an individual goes through when joining any new group or organisation (Schein, 1971). Schein identifies the elements of such a process as including the learning of the basic goals of the organisation and the preferred methods of obtaining them, the responsibilities of the role which the individual is to take up, together with expected behaviour and the set of rules relating to the maintenance of the group.

The strength of pressure to conform in any group can be extremely high. The work of Sherif has already been outlined earlier in this chapter but another

piece of research on this which is cited widely is that of Asch (1971). He describes an experiment which induced individuals either to conform to or resist a majority view of a fact which was totally incorrect. He found that there was a marked move towards the majority (who were incorrect) to the extent that one third of research subjects sought conformity. However, 68 per cent remained independent. He therefore considered the individual differences which led them either to conformity or independence. Those who remained independent displayed a certain confidence in their own perceptions or were independent and *withdrawn* from the process in an emotionally detached way. Some people who remained independent indicated a need to complete the task in a proper way regardless of the strength of the argument of the majority. Of those subjects who yielded to the incorrect majority view, in a few there was an actual distortion of perception under the stress of the group pressure. In the majority, there was a distortion of judgement in that individuals decided that "they must be wrong" in the light of the majority viewpoint and did not have the confidence to hold on to their original belief. Lastly, there was a "distortion of action" where subjects knew they were right but were concerned to behave with the majority and therefore conformed.

Asch then considered the effect of changing the degree of incorrectness of the majority opinion and found that independence did increase with the degree of incorrectness. However, there were still some subjects who were prepared to go along with the majority. He concludes that, among the factors that influence independence or yielding is the character of the group forces including the size of the majority and the character of the individual.

Brown (1988) draws attention to the possibility that cultural differences may affect the degree of conformity required by a group. For example, certain tribes require unanimous decisions while other societies work on the basis of majority decisions. The range of acceptable behaviours within a group can also vary depending on the individual's status within the group and whether any deviant behaviour threatens the core of the group's beliefs system. Leaders are expected to lead by example although high-status members are able to deviate from the norm more than subordinates.

Johnson and Johnson (1997) see group norms as varying in significance depending on their relationship to the overall function or aim or objective of the group. They recognise that a norm can become internalised that a group member is following it unconsciously. They hold that group norms help a group maintain behavioural consistency, enabling a member to predict behaviour as well as conforming. There are only norms relevant to the group's functions. They can apply to some members and not to others, depending on the individual's role within the group. Group norms can often serve as substitutes for direct influence over members.

> Norms are a protection against the capricious or inconsistent use of influence by high-power members, but they also free the high-power members from constantly checking the behaviour of low-power members to make sure they are conforming" (Johnson and Johnson, 1997, p433).

Norms can be introduced to a group directly by stating the case for the adoption of such a norm, or indirectly, by modelling behaviour or importing from another group.

What happens if someone deviates from the established standards? Consideration will be given to the role of the deviant later in this chapter but the following quotation from Cartwright and Zander gives an indication of the strength of group conformity in one particular workplace:

> First we would talk about her unfairness among ourselves. If that did not reach her, we talked about her where she could overhear us. If she still did not change, one of us would approach her in the lounge and ask her if she was trying to kill our jobs. That usually did the trick (Cartwright and Zander, 1968, p141).

Theories around conformity have been criticised in two respects. Firstly, Hollander and Willis define conformity as being "behaviour *intended* to fulfil normative group expectancies as presently *perceived* by the individual" (Hollander and Willis, 1971, p234). They deny that the concept of

conformity contains any element of movement towards a standard. They also argue that the level of conformity is not homogeneous throughout any one group.

Serge Moscovici summarises the main threads of literature on the theory of conformity at the time when he was writing as being covered by the following six main points (Moscovici, 1976).

1. Social influence in a group is unequally distributed and is exerted in a unilateral manner.
2. The function of social influence is to maintain and reinforce social control.
3. Dependence relations determine the direction and the amount of social influence exerted in a group.
4. States of uncertainty and the need to reduce uncertainty determine the forms taken by the influence processes.
5. The consensus aimed at by influence exchange is based on the norm of objectivity.
6. All influence processes are seen from the vantage point of conformity, and conformity alone is believed to underlie the essential features of these processes.

Moscovici argues that the emphasis on conformity in the above paradigm does not permit recognition of the role of the individual or deviant in influencing a group. It has the effect of minimising the role of the deviant in a negative way. He states: "Surely independence is itself a quest for "difference" or the defence of difference, which carries with it the risk of isolation and deviance and which calls for unusual strength and qualities" (Moscovici, 1976, p63). Here Moscovici is seeking to redress the balance of power between a group and its individual members, emphasising the value of an individual's contribution to the totality of the group.

Thus, to perform at their best, groups need to maintain their membership through a process of cohesiveness and, in most cases, conformity. The

purpose of highlighting the above variety of literature has been to indicate the strength of power that there can be in a group to exercise constraint on the behaviour of its members.

(d) Deviance and dissonance

The strength of the forces on the individual to conform has already been stressed above. How does an individual resolve differences between herself and a group when it is known that the ultimate sanction might be exclusion? Deviants are those members of the group who seek to move away from accepted norms relating to behaviour and actions within an established group. Cartwright and Zander (1968) state that deviants may find ways of protecting themselves from the potential results of this conflict by choosing to listen only to arguments which agree with their own position. They may also hide their deviant behaviour or behave to the minimum standard required.

It has been argued that where an individual has a conflict of values she will attempt to resolve them and "make them fit better (dissonance reduction)" (Festinger and Aronson, 1968, p125). Dissonance can be aroused by disagreement with others. Festinger and Aronson (1968) suggest that the degree of dissonance will depend on two factors – firstly, the relative importance of the person who voices the disagreement and, secondly, the significance of the issue upon which the disagreement is based. They summarise the research demonstrating the ways in which a person will seek to reduce such dissonance:

> In general, he may attempt to convince himself that the content area in which the disagreement exists is relatively unimportant; he may attempt to derogate the person or group that disagrees with him; he may attempt to eliminate the disagreement either by changing his own opinion or attempting to influence the disagreeing persons to change theirs; or he may seek additional social support for the opinion he holds, thus, in essence, adding new cognitions which are consonant with his own opinions" (Festinger and Aronson, 1968, p130).

They also recognise that dissonance can be caused by group influence in forcing a person to behave publicly in a way with which she would not agree in private. They consider the situation where someone is asked to do something for a reward with which she disagrees, and then demonstrate that if someone is offered a small reward for stating publicly something which she does not believe to be true, the private belief will tend to move towards the position of the public statement. However, if a large reward is offered, the opposite tends to result.

Moscovici (1976) disputed the validity of seeing conformity as a movement towards a standardisation of a group's norms. He questioned the need to devalue the influence of the deviant and recognised that the deviant has an important role to play in influencing the group. Part of that influence relates to the very fact of being a minority which, by its very nature, can be more attractive to other members of a group.

However, it is clear that, as far as the project's informants are concerned, the influences on them to conform to group requirements of which they are a member are potentially great. At this point, it is useful to recall the distinction made between spontaneous and organised groups. Spontaneous groups are more informal and unlikely to have as great or as detailed demands upon their members as those which are more organised. An example of this in practice in the voluntary sector might be whether the group has a formal written constitution or set of rules or not. The creation of such a document, in my experience, often raises the question of acceptable norms which have not been needed to be addressed previously.

4. Current research in business ethics on group influence

Having considered relevant literature within general theory around groups, I now examine the contribution of research within the field of business ethics. There is a recognised paucity of work which has been carried out on the group influence in business ethics (Abdolmohammadi et al, 1997). Partly, this problem arises because the field of "business ethics" is a relatively new

one. However, research exists which has used the context of business in which to discover theories relating to the influence of group processes on moral decisions in the workplace. The main points which emerge are as follows.

1. Groups of workers in a factory have been found to set their own norms around acceptable and unacceptable levels of pilfering from their employer. Donald Horning (1970) established that workers in a particular factory identified three types of ownership of property in the company: that owned by individuals, that having corporate ownership and that which was uncertain. The last category tended to comprise company-owned goods which were of little value and of large quantity. He discovered that there were workgroup norms which identified the types of goods which were acceptable to pilfer and those which were not. These norms tended to be conveyed through the relation of stories ("folklore") about "heroes and recreants" (Horning, 1970, p62) and laid down guidelines for the potential pilferer. Those who exceeded the limits were no longer given the support of their colleagues.

2. The role models of peers and top management within the organisation are the major predictors of ethical/unethical behaviour, together with the availability of opportunity (Zey-Ferrell and Ferrell, 1982).

3. Peer influence was significant in influencing unethical behavioural intentions in the workplace (Jones and Kavanagh, 1996).

4. Younger people were more likely to be influenced by group norms while an older group were more subject to the influence of their managers (Jones and Kavanagh, 1996).

5. Members of groups are more likely to modify their value framework under the influence of the group (Schminke and Wells, 1999).

6. Individuals are more likely to refer to their group within their department than other groups who are outside it but still within the organisation for a sharing of ethical reasoning and moral intent (Granitz and Ward, 2001).

If one brings together the theories relating to groups from the generalised literature, together with the specific points raised by research within business ethics, one generates a picture of the influence of being a member of a group as potentially extremely strong, the fear of exclusion providing a pressure to conform with what is required by membership of a group, following acceptable behaviour patterns and norms. Ten of the 16 informants identified at least one influence from either a peer group internal to their employing organisation or from peers outside that organisation and I intend to treat the two separately, making that distinction.

5. The nature of peer/group influence (internal to organisation)

Nineteen concepts have been identified in total as relating to a source of influence of peers within the organisation. All relate to some aspect of conforming to peer expectations.

	per cent
Conforming	60
Perceptions of peers	20
Support from peers	20

Examples of concepts which show a desire to conform to the norms imposed by the peer/group influence include the following:

Acceptance that other people do it (Bob)

Repercussions from immediate colleagues (Gaynor)

Had done two previous collections for others with enthusiasm and success (Helen).

Informants' concern for how they would be perceived by peers is demonstrated by the following examples:

Losing face (Gaynor)

Fear of being seen to be involved (Leo).

The need to recognise peer support is evidenced by the following:

Fear of lack of support from other colleagues (Gaynor)

Supported by own manager and team (Angela).

What was the nature of the group which was exerting this influence within the employing organisation? Broadly, it related to "colleagues", "team", a non-defined, non-specific grouping within the informants' cognitive map of their situation at their employment. However, it appeared to have a common "voice" and was identified by eight of the 16 informants as having an influence within the context of their decision. While I did not explore the exact nature of this influence with individual informants, it was clear to me that they could have named a list of individuals who they would see as being part of that grouping and that they would see it as being a form of informal membership group rather than a reference group.

Having considered the question of obedience to authority within organisations within the literature review, I have sought evidence of such obedience from within the informants' cognitive maps. It does appear that the nature of the moral decision in many cases relates to the potential need to be disobedient. Bob and Edith have already been discussed because of their overt behaviour against apparent organisational rules. It could be argued that problems brought by Colin, Don, Frederick, Joanne, and Mark involved the consideration of disobedience to known authority requirements. Colin, Frederick and Joanne decided to conform to the requirements of their

employers while obviously feeling a degree of discomfort about their decision. Don and Mark both decided to go against organisational procedures in their situations. It would not be appropriate to attempt to draw any further conclusions from the above pattern. All that can be said is that obedience to authority was obviously a major factor within the decisions brought to this research project.

When one comes to consider the nature of the influence of peer groups on individual situations, it is illuminating to consider the example of Leo. Leo identified 11 concepts within his cognitive map concerning the question of whether to back a colleague (and friend) in protesting about current working practices. Two of these related to organisational influences, totalling -1. Eight related to individual values totalling -1 (negatives being against the decision). In addition there was one concept which he related to "peer pressure" which had a value of +2 (promoting his decision). Thus, this sole influence can be identified as being a counteracting factor in the resulting balanced decision. This example also serves to demonstrate the effect of membership of different groups. Leo is concerned about his family and their welfare (*Didn't want to risk career and family*); he brings with him his own values relating to interpersonal relationships (*Wanted to back a friend*). However, his peer group are not supporting him (*Most managers had not backed him*) and the organisational pressures were telling him not to get involved (*Fear of being seen to be involved*). Thus conflict appears to be created by membership of different groups which he is seeking to resolve.

The literature review around influences of groups raised a number of questions including those relating to the strength of influence, the nature of the groups identified and the effect of obedience to authority. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the strength of influence of membership of groups is less relatively speaking to those of individual values and organisational pressures. However, it can be the balancing factor within the decision as illustrated above. With regards to the nature of the groups identified, they would appear to be a mixture of peer groups, work groups, membership and reference groups but all with a clear identity of the

individuals involved within the informants' cognitive map. In terms of the nature of the group determining the degree of conformity, this research appears to suggest that more informal groups exert less pressure to conform on their members. None of the groups referred to by the project's informants appeared to be to any degree formal.

It is identified that the need to maintain obedience to organisational rules and their authority form a major part of the internal debate of the decision-making process within these informants. Finally, there would appear to be no relationship between age and the propensity to be influenced by group processes.

6. Peer/group influence (external to organisation)

Four informants draw on the influence of a group of peers which is external to the organisation to which they belong (Bob, Colin, Mark and Owen). Bob and Colin are both within the private sector and are looking towards what is an industry norm in their situation. Mark and Owen's decisions both relate to their role as representatives within a union and the union is perceived as being external to the organisation. In both these latter cases, this influence is either the strongest or the equal strongest above all other influences. In Owen, no concept deriving from an organisational influence is identified. This tends to indicate the relative strength of the influence of union membership.

7. The influence of being a "professional"

The above section has begun to highlight the nature and influence of various groups which exist in the "business" world and within organisations. One type of social grouping which needs particular attention in this project is that of professions, their organisations and their influence. By professions, I mean those types of employment which provide member organisations which may monitor quality, provide "standards" and disciplinary procedures where necessary. Examples would include the medical profession, lawyers,

engineers, teachers and environmental health officers. To what extent does perceiving oneself as being a "professional" influence one's moral decisions in the workplace?

Some of the literature around professionalism identifies that one of the characteristics of the concept of professionalism is a link with a system of moral values. Members of a particular profession commit themselves to complying with a code laid down by their organisation (Durkheim, 1957; MacDonald, 1995; Baron, 1999). At the same time, recognition is made of a potential conflict between being a member of a professional grouping and, also, a bureaucratic organisation. An increasing number of professions are working within employing organisations rather than being sole practitioners or partners in, for example, a firm of solicitors or medical practice (Friedson, 1994).

It is acknowledged that different disciplines have viewed professionalism differently (Friedson, 1994; Flynn, 1999). Thus, sociologists have identified professionals as being linked by the concept of serving the public need and good while economists expressed concern about the monopolistic nature of their market and political scientists saw them as "privileged private governments" (Friedson, 1994, p13). He concludes that it is impossible to propose an all-purposeful definition of what is meant by professionalism. There are a number of elements within the concept which change according to the historical societal context. Those elements include the nature of the occupation, the organisation, the training involved and its organisation in order to reach a nationally recognised qualification and the monitoring of quality standards by an external body or peers.

Professionalization might be defined as a process by which an organized occupation, usually but not always by virtue of making a claim to special esoteric competence and to concern for the quality of its work and its benefits to society, obtains the exclusive right to perform a particular kind of work, control training for and access to it,

> and control the right of determining and evaluating the way the work is performed. (Friedson, 1994, p62)

Adherence to a common values system is seen as giving a professional grouping particular authority (MacDonald, 1995). For example, the General Medical Council exerts its moral authority in declaring its position on particular medical ethical issues and expects its members to comply with its guidance. However, while the concept of "professional" values might be seen to include an emphasis on quality of service and qualifications, public service and altruism, a negative aspect of such value systems reflected in a respect for fellow members can often result in a tendency to protect each other against the overall interests of the public at large. A recent example of this is the problem with children's heart surgery at Bristol where medical colleagues apparently were aware that lives were at risk as a result of particular practices but did very little to prevent a continuation for some time (Barrowclough, 2000). Barrowclough interviewed Stephen Bolsin who spent some time while working at Bristol as an anaesthetist recording the results of heart surgery on children and who consistently expressed concern to various authorities about the quality of the surgery and the higher than average mortality rate. As a result of his intervention, he had to move with his family to work in Australia and the interview with him identifies the way in which he has been excluded by fellow professionals.

> Professor Stephen Bolsin was recently made aware of just how much he is still reviled by elements within Britain's medical world. His enlightenment came when an Australian doctor who had just returned from a conference in England telephoned a colleague of Bolsin at Geelong Hospital, near Melbourne. "I think you should know that you are employing one of the most hated anaesthetists in Europe," he said. (Barrowclough, 2000)

Thus the negative effects of professionals acting together would appear to be in direct conflict with the public interest. Just as members support each other within membership of a profession, they are as unsupportive in rejecting

someone who no longer appears to adhere to their requirements in terms of ethical behaviour.

Durkheim perceived the influence of professional ethics as being a positive example of adherence to a values system, contrasting it with the context of the economic/business community where he could identify few common values. However, in an unpublished MBA thesis, Heyes (1996) studied the impact of professionalism on the decision-making process in librarianship. He concluded that the influence of professionalism was greatest when the issue involved professional values but assumed that this was a negative effect upon an otherwise rational process. In other words, he did not perceive the nature of the professional values as expressed as being "objective" or "rational" because he could not perceive any particular logic to them.

One particular piece of writing highlights the role of ethics within a profession at work. Quallington (2000) describes a qualitative piece of research carried out around ethical issues for nurses using an interview process. She summarises the issues which arose as follows:

1. Ethics are a big issue within nursing care.
2. Ethics are "felt rather than thought" (p6) – 100 per cent identified feelings as being a predominant indicator that the situation they were involved in involved ethical factors. However, all the respondents were women (and she refers to Gilligan).
3. Their ethical responses tended to rely on gut feelings, on intuition that something felt inherently either right or wrong.
4. Their frustration within ethical dilemmas related to their relative powerlessness to act differently. This often related to a clash with other professions, e.g. doctors.

Quallington comes from a nursing lecturer background and concludes that ethical dilemmas can be seen in general as being a struggle between individual and professional values.

In summary, the influence of being a member of a professional body is likely to be greatest when its value system relating to both quality of work and ethical practice is being brought into the context of a particular decision. This may or may not conflict with other values and can be perceived as being outside the influence of being an employee within an employing organisation.

The influence of being a *professional* among other professionals appears in four cases (Angela, Colin, Frederick and Neil). Angela and Frederick were both professionals by type of employment while Colin was a manager in industry. For Angela, Frederick and Neil, the professional influence was a force for the decision made while in the case of Colin, it was against the decision. Colin's concept related to a technical query around a "professional" assessment to be made. Both Angela and Frederick had organisational influences which were the strongest influence for them but also working against the decision they made. For Neil in higher education, it was initially unclear whether the professional influence which he identified was internal or external to the organisation. Subsequent contact with him clarified that it was internal in his case. However, for Angela, Colin and Frederick, I have assumed that the influence of being a professional among other professionals is external to the organisation.

Neil was using professional values to judge a fellow professional. The implicit values relate to standards of behaviour and performance as well as being fair to others. Frederick referred to being a professional as a means of testing his technical knowledge and doing a "proper" job. Colin was using professional knowledge to assess the situation in relation to whether to negotiate an illegal compensation. Angela referred to professional influence in the values implied by the practice being discussed (*People at risk by withholding of info*).

From the above, it can be concluded that informants identified the influence of being a "professional" which, in this instance, is self-defining, as relating to either the technical knowledge implied or the underpinning values which

governed behaviour and performance. Being a professional brings an additional potential influence to a moral decision in the workplace.

8. Membership of multiple groups

This chapter seeks to outline the varying factors which influence the relationship between individuals and groups. It also demonstrates that the relationships are complex and are themselves influenced by a number of differing factors which vary in weight and strength. Hinton and Reitz (1971) consider these relative influences and conclude that the influence of the group on the individual member is, in most circumstances, greater. Thus, according to them, the group is more powerful than the individual. But does the group have more influence over an individual's behaviour than the individual?

There are two concepts which need to be mentioned before concluding this chapter. The first is the question of multiple membership of groups. This is recognised by Cartwright and Zander who conclude that it causes potential conflict. The values or norms of the different groups may differ to such an extent as to be incompatible or contradictory. They state that

> it is commonly observed that the majority of people function efficiently as members of many groups. Often they may be only vaguely aware of the inconsistencies of their beliefs, acting in accord with the standards of the group that is most salient at the moment or managing to resolve the conflicts without being aware of them at all (Cartwright and Zander, 1968, p51).

How do we reconcile the different influences of the disparate groups to which we, as individuals, belong? Halford and Leonard (1999), in considering the influence of professionalism, conclude that we change identities depending on the social context. They admit that they are not clear as to whether external influences allow this to happen or not but what emerges is a type of fluidity between different identities and their particular influence and discourses. Do we "change our skins" as they suggest or do we retain

influences from all our group membership and apply them as appropriate within a certain context? What can we learn from the project informants' experience?

Each informant was asked to name the source of the influence of a particular construct within their cognitive map. They were remarkably consistent in doing so and an analysis has been made of the strongest influence in each of the 16 informants' situations. Three informants had "ties" in strength of total influence (Frederick, Mark and Penny). Of the remainder, the strongest influence was as follows.

Influence	No. of informants
Organisational	6
Individual	5
Peer/group internal	1
Peer/group external	1

Both peer group instances were in cases of dilemmas. Where the organisational influence was strongest, in five cases, the influence was positive and in one case, negative (against the eventual decision). Where the individual influence was strongest, in four cases, the influence was positive and in one case, negative. There appeared to be no relationship between the strongest influence and gender, K-stage or type of employer. The pattern which appears to be emerging thus shows individual values on the one hand and organisational values on the other, with peer/group influences coming into play where the problem is particularly balanced. The suggestion that we might change *identities* depending on the context when different group values are in conflict does not appear to be supported here. Rather, informants are aware of the differing influences within a particular situation and they take account of the varying conflicting constructs in making a moral decision in the workplace.

In terms of membership of *groups*, it can be stated from the above data that such membership becomes a significant influence. However, in making the distinction between employing organisations and groups, it is clear that the fine balance is between values emanating from oneself and one's own life experience and those of the employer.

9. Conclusions

This chapter began by considering what is meant when we talk about a "group of people" and concluded that the following definition best fits our normal construct:

> A group is a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree" (Cartwright and Zander, 1968, p46).

The distinction was then made between membership and reference groups and their varying significance to individuals explored. At this point, as *norms* emerged as being pertinent to the life of groups, it became important to define what was meant by the term and this was done in terms of "what actually happens in practice" and "on average".

Consideration was then given to the theory of the development of groups, their cohesiveness, the role of norms within a group and what happens when a member is in conflict with a group. The literature review concluded with a summary of salient points from the field of business ethics,

In reflecting on the experience of the project's informants, it was clear that those who referred to an influence deriving from their peers/group which was internal to the organisation revealed constructs relating to conforming to the required behaviour of their peer/group, their need to be perceived in a particular way to meet the expectations of peers and their need for or acceptance of support from that group.

The influence of membership of a peer/group was significant in holding the balance in one particular dilemma but its strength was less relatively speaking to those of individual values and organisational pressures. With regards to the nature of the groups identified, they would appear to be a mixture of peer groups, work groups, membership and reference groups but informants referring to such a group could have identified its members. Those informants who identified the influence of being a "professional" related the nature of that factor as deriving from the required technical knowledge or the underpinning values which governed behaviour and performance.

In terms of membership of multiple groups, the strongest influence was considered which emerged as that emanating from the employing organisation, followed by the influence from an individual's personal values. In addition, it was clear that informants are aware of the differing influences within a particular situation and they take account of the varying conflicting constructs in making a moral decision in the workplace.

In conclusion, the influence of membership of groups when making a moral decision in the workplace is weaker than that coming from the organisation and the individual. It is clear that the fine balance in such decision-making is between values emanating from oneself and one's own life experience and those of the employer.

Chapter Eleven:

Conclusions

It is time to return to this project's aim and objectives and to reflect on the conclusions reached in relation to each. In investigating the process of making a moral decision in the workplace, I have sought to find out "what happens". Every day, people in the workplace are making moral decisions which have an impact on other people's lives. Is there a specific process which individuals go through? Is it identifiable? What are the influences on such decisions? Are there common factors involved? How do people deal with really difficult and tough decisions? At the same time, whilst the overall aim has been to explore the process of making moral decisions in the workplace with a view to enlightening others I wanted to get away from the majority quantitative approach of much of the writing of business ethics. I have sought to use a method which enables the project to take a holistic approach, rooting the research in the totality of an individual's experience set in its social and historical context. It felt that there were a lot of factors involved, including emotive issues, and I needed to find a way that would allow all the elements of the decision to be explored with the informant. Chapters Two and Three set out the adopted methodology for the project in the light of this aim and presented the argument for a social constructionist ontology and epistemology, together with the identification of two research methods which enabled the underpinning methodology to be reflected in practice. The overall purpose of a social constructionist project is to *describe* the concept being researched. Cognitive mapping proved to be a useful interviewing tool for drawing out the fine detail around recalling the thought processes within a moral decision and, at the same time, was an innovative use of the technique in exploring decisions of this nature. It also generated the arithmetic of the dilemmas and the identification of relative strengths of influence. Narrative theory enabled the informants to tell their own story as they saw it and provided a different form of data to that gained through the mapping process for subsequent analysis. Both methods enabled the

"holistic" approach that I sought while also providing the opportunity to analyse in greater detail. At the same time, the mapping process placed a structure and form on the decisions which gave them common elements which could lead to comparison, for example, of the influences identified and their relative strengths.

Chapter Four outlined what happened in practice in working with a group of 16 research informants using the above methods and the methods used to analyse the information gained. The historical perspective which was taken proved to be an extra strength within the methods used in that it meant that the informants reflected on their own reality and experiences rather than a scenario. It is concluded that the methods used enabled a richness of data. The caveat remains that any common elements that arise from the data gained from the 16 informants' stories and maps can only be generalised within that group of 16 individuals.

In Chapter Five, I examined the nature of the process of the decision as described by the research informants. I concluded that making a decision involves an element of information, of choice between at least two different options, each of which being possible to achieve, and that often there is an element of debate involved. Further, a decision is usually consciously made and is not made out of habit. However, that does not mean that it cannot be repeated. A decision is not a process where it is considered to have a defined structure. It has elements which feed into it relating to identifying the problem, thinking through the relevant information, considering the balance of the various influences within the situation, and acting accordingly. The nature of what happens before the action is multifarious and diverse, sometimes unpredictable and elusive to capture. At the same time, I was able to make a distinction between a *decision* and a *dilemma* and, through the development of simple arithmetic within the cognitive maps, I demonstrated the fine balance within dilemmas of constructs for and against the making of the decision.

I considered the question of how we obtain our ability to reason morally, together with our values, in Chapter Six and outlined, in particular, the work of Lawrence Kohlberg in this field. The evidence was considered on the question of whether informants were strategic in their choice of level of moral reasoning. It was concluded that, while there was not sufficient evidence that this was happening, it was a possibility which might be investigated further in future work outside the scope of this thesis. In relation to Kohlberg's work, it is suggested that the experience of working with these informants supports the argument that Kohlberg's Stage 6 may not exist in practice because of the difficulty of identifying it. The distinction between content and process within the moral decisions described was made. There was no evidence that an individual's age affected the level of their moral reasoning. It was also clear that individual values became one of any number of constructs involved in a decision and their influence was taken on the same basis as constructs from other influences. Finally, this chapter served to highlight the importance of membership of community, both in helping us to gain our values and in influencing us within moral decisions.

Chapter Seven explored the way in which an individual's gender affects the way they approach a moral argument. Consideration was given of Carol Gilligan's theory in relation to the justice and care perspectives and it was concluded that, broadly speaking, this project supports Gilligan's theories in stating that men and women take the different moral perspectives of justice and of care in their general approach to making moral decisions in the workplace. However, it did highlight evidence that women are capable of showing a justice perspective if deemed by them to be appropriate and there was a small amount of evidence that males, similarly, were capable of demonstrating a care perspective. Issues were raised in relation to the situation in two cases where women were experiencing bullying behaviour from female managers. Chapter Seven then addressed the question of how an individual's emotions affect moral decisions. Informants were shown to have accepted their own emotions as having a value of their own alongside informative and reasoning concepts. It was also demonstrated that they were

generated from a range of influences, depending on their nature. More constructs implying emotions were expressed by women than by men.

In Chapter Eight, I considered the specific sub-objective of this project relating to how ethical theory is reflected in the practice of 16 individuals. I concluded that virtue theory provides an overall explanatory theory of what happens in practice within 16 different moral decisions in the workplace. The ability to impose MacIntyre's virtue theory on the experience of informants as a philosophical explanation for their moral reasoning was demonstrated. I further concluded that, within that context, virtues can be seen to have a justice or care approach relating to the gender of the decision-maker. However, within the context of virtue theory, the concept of justice became another virtue to be promoted, alongside others. Consideration was given to the apparent discrepancy between the majority of informants' description of their ethical perspective as deontological while referring to virtues which have a theoretical teleological framework.

Chapter Nine then considered the nature of the influence of an employing organisation. Five points emerged. The first related to the nature of organisational culture appearing to relate primarily to expected behaviour, actions and beliefs rather than having any specific moral content. Secondly, this research found a relationship between informants in higher management who also reason morally at higher K-stages although it is not clear whether they are influenced by their role to do so or whether they are in that role because they have an ability to use higher K-stages in moral reasoning. Thirdly, within this group of informants, the influence of society in general was non-existent or minimal. Fourthly, it was concluded that informants arguing at higher levels of moral reasoning had a greater propensity to follow their own values when they were in potential conflict with those of their employing organisation. Finally, the whole picture of the relationship between an employee and her employing organisation was illuminated as being one involving *power, emotions* and tension.

In Chapter Ten, I considered the nature of the influence of membership of groups, both within the employing organisation and outside it, together with the influence of being a *professional* and a member of a union. The nature of the influence of being a member of a group related to conforming to the required behaviour of the peer/group, the need to be perceived in a particular way to meet the expectations of peers and the need for or acceptance of support from that group. The strength of this influence was less relatively speaking to those of individual values and organisational pressures. The influence of being a "professional" related to the nature of that factor as deriving either from the required technical knowledge or the underpinning values which governed behaviour and performance. In terms of membership of multiple groups, the strongest influence emerged as that emanating from the employing organisation, followed by the influence from an individual's personal values. Individuals were aware of conflicting messages and took account of them.

In concluding this thesis, I aim to show, firstly, its originality in terms of what it seeks to do and the research methods employed. I then review the objectives of the project before summarising the results which emerged from the empirical work with informants. I re-visit the four themes relating to membership of community, emotions, virtues and gender issues before finishing with three questions which emerged from the methodology – "does it make 'sense'?", "does it inform the reader, building on existing knowledge?" and "does it make a difference?" However, the aim of the project is not to offer generalisable *conclusions* as such. It has not sought to demonstrate pre-conceived hypotheses about the likely nature of the process of making a moral decision in the workplace. Rather, in line with its social constructionist approach, it seeks to *illuminate* the subject for the reader and to offer pointers for future research. The nature of that illumination will be different for each reader, depending on the level of her previous knowledge and awareness. Some of it will confirm what is already known and other parts will inevitably, because of its originality, offer new information. Whether this "new" information is, in fact, new to the reader will depend on whether she comes to the subject intuitively or with a level of knowledge of

previous academic research. Because most of us are in, or have been in, work, much of the data brought to the project by its informants is familiar in that we can relate to it through our own experience. However, that does not mean that it has previously been captured within an academic context and its elements examined and treated in the way in which this project has approached the subject. The method of analysing familiar material has thrown new perspectives upon it. It has also thrown up potential *patterns* for future investigation. In doing so, it is not the purpose of this research to surmise on the potential reasons for such patterns. As the researcher, I would have no additional authority with which to voice such opinions. My role is to place the results before the reader for *her* to draw such conclusions as she might wish. To take an example, I found that, in referring to the requisite virtues, informants were taking a justice or care perspective according to their gender. This "makes sense" in the light of Gilligan's theory but is "new" information in relation to existing research at the time of writing. All I can say is that this is what happened within the context of 16 stories.

It has been demonstrated throughout the literature review that most of the work relating to the nature and process of moral decisions in the workplace has used a quantitative approach to elicit information in relation to influences and factors on such decisions. The fact that this project looked towards a qualitative perspective within its methodology and resultant methods puts it in a minority situation within the existing research framework. Whilst others have attempted (as, indeed, I have) to take a holistic approach to the subject (for example, Derry, 1987; Vyakarnam et al, 1997; Crane 1999), it has tended to result in an inappropriate formalising of a process or a dissection of its parts. In seeking to *describe* what happens in such situations, to "paint a picture", through taking a social constructionist standpoint, sharing the reality of others, I have sought to illuminate our current knowledge of the *whole*. Certainly, I have been unable to find evidence elsewhere of the use of cognitive mapping and the Decision Explorer software in the investigation of this area of research. Much of what has emerged from the experiences of 16 informants has confirmed existing theory but it has also raised questions and tended to highlight other aspects of individual moral decisions in

organisations which may have been passed over in the past. An example of this would be the role of emotions within a moral framework in organisations.

At the same time, my aim has been to let the informants' voices "speak for themselves". While recognising that there is an inevitable element of influence from the researcher, I have deliberately sought to avoid imposing too many interpretative layers upon what they had to say. The maps and the narratives belong to the informants and I have shown the nature of the subsequent coding and analysis in order to attempt to remain as honest to the original material as possible.

The limitations of the project relate to the nature of the sample of informants. I have justified the size of the sample as being appropriate to the methods used. However, the work would have been enhanced with a wider range of background of informants including cultural diversity. It was difficult to control this, given the voluntary nature of the informants' involvement. The second limitation of the project relates to the generalisability of its findings. It is not possible to universalise any particular results. Instead, it presents a rich picture of 16 moral decisions in the workplace which enlightens others as to the nature of their predicament and the way they approached its resolution.

It is pertinent to return to the original aim and objectives of this project at this point. The title of the thesis is "Business Ethics: the process of making a moral decision in the workplace". Its aim has been to investigate how people work their way through such decisions in practice, to identify the various influences upon them and to compare the way they work through a decision with philosophical theory as it has developed around moral and ethical issues. How has the work with informants informed us as a result?

Firstly, it is clear that, while there might be said to be some form of process around making such decisions, there is no one particular identifiable pattern except that, at times, aspects are revisited and repeated. The factors within

such a process vary as much as the context to which they refer. How one's behaviour is influenced in such situations is haphazard and, often, not deliberated. The range of perspectives on the situation is subject to the influences around an individual who adopts a strategy to make sense of the situation in which she finds herself. Included within the potential factors to be considered are one's emotions and feelings and one's awareness of the power relationships within the societal context. As important, would appear to be a common desire to behave "for the good" of others and to be perceived by others to be doing so.

The nature of the identified dilemmas points to the difficulties involved in making moral decisions in the workplace, in particular, situations where individual values are in conflict with those of organisations. The influence of the organisation is powerful. Much of the concepts deriving from an organisational influence relate to fear either explicit or implicit. To ignore or to undervalue the role of emotions in that situation would be to distort the informants' stories which tell of stress and strong feelings within the decisions that they shared. Thus, job security is shown to affect the content of moral decisions and the tensions between an individual and their employing organisation confirm how difficult it is to decide to "blow the whistle" publicly on an employer's malpractice. Implied references to the existence of an organisational culture tended to refer to the nature of appropriate behaviour. However, such behaviour did highlight underpinning values within that culture as in the case of Helen who was expected to collect enough money to enable them to give someone leaving a gift of a particular monetary worth. At the same time, this particular sample indicates that the higher the level at which an individual is arguing morally, the less likely she is to conform to organisational influences without question.

The project also sought to compare individual practice in making moral decisions with philosophical theory. Broadly, it demonstrated that informants were using virtue theory and that MacIntyre's model of virtue theory could be successfully imposed upon their thought processes. At the same time, it failed to identify anyone arguing at Kohlberg's Stage 6 which, again, serves

to question whether it is possible to identify someone reasoning at Stage 6. It has also highlighted the tension between business and ethics – the *agon*. The decisions which were the hardest for the project's informants demonstrated the tension and conflict between organisational and individual values. The individual does not leave her values behind when she takes on a job within a place of employment. She brings them with her and when they conflict with those which the organisation is demanding of her, she is faced with this discord. We have had the privilege of seeing the reality of this within the informants' experiences at work.

The research has raised four questions which remain currently unanswered. The first relates to the nature of the content and strategy of any one particular moral decision. Do individuals choose their moral strategy to fit the particular context? Are they choosing to argue at Kohlberg's Stage 2 (the stage of individual instrumental purpose and exchange), for example, because it best suits the situation when a conventional business attitude is being called for by others? Do we control and make choices about how we consider our moral decisions or do we carry them all through at our best ability in all cases? There is the potential for an individual to use a strategy here. While this project found no direct evidence that informants were working in this way, it is possible that it was happening and therefore this issue needs further exploration within other contexts.

The second issue arises within the relationship between the role within which an individual works and the K-stage that they use. It is unclear whether a particular role within employment and the way that an individual is required to behave within that role dictates the K-stage used in making moral decisions or whether the fact that an individual is using a particular K-stage indicates a specific ability and suitability for that role. While I have maintained that individuals tend to express virtues commensurate with the requirements of their role, it is not clear whether the role also demands of it a particular level of moral reasoning.

The third issue relates to the apparent conflict between the theoretical teleological nature of virtues within current philosophical theory and the fact that the majority of informants identified their perspective on their decision as deontological in nature while also referring to a general aim of conforming to particular virtues. While a number of possible reasons for this were raised, no one solution was found to be totally acceptable and so this provides another area for further investigation.

Lastly, one issue which might have been picked up from the narratives brought to me has deliberately not been investigated further. This is the apparent high incidence within the sample of women apparently bullying other women (mentioned in two instances). While gender issues are explored, it seems to me that this is an issue which might usefully be investigated further from a feminist perspective. The underpinning values of feminism relating to the concept of sorority and fellowship between women within a perceived male-dominated society do not sit easily with the evidence of women bullying others. As a practitioner, I am aware that this can be a common occurrence but it also raise questions relating to Gilligan's theory of justice and care in that it would be expected that women would be seeking to build working relationships founded on the principle of care for colleagues. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate further the nature of the leadership style being displayed by the perpetrator of the bullying.

At this point I return to the four themes which have run through the thesis which are membership of community, emotions, virtues and gender issues. The tension between being a "good" employee and ethics within a work situation relates to membership of different communities. Informants have identified the communities from which they draw their influences when making moral decisions. They include their own individual values (which are adopted as a result of membership of communities such as family and school), peer groups and professional groups and their employing organisation. All seek that their members conform to their particular set of values and it is this conflict which results in the tensions within moral decisions in the workplace. Others have sought to address this problem by

identifying the type of community which would better synchronise with the values of an individual (for example, Kohlberg's just community and the Marxist approach of Wray-Bliss and Parker (1998)) and the experience of the project's informants points to the need to work out a more supportive organisational framework through structural innovation.

Secondly, emotions have been shown to have a place alongside rationality and objectivity, whether it is within the philosophical theory relating to the nature of ethical statements or the use of an individual's emotions to promote effectiveness in the workplace by an employer. Emotions are present in many situations where hard choices are being made in relation to the ethicality of any particular action and they are taken into account by the decision-maker alongside all the other factors being considered.

Thirdly, while Aristotle set out to describe how we reason through moral decisions in terms of the virtues necessary to gain *eudaimonia*, the empirical research has shown how informants have tended to identify virtues to which they have aspired within the context of their situation. The necessity to act in accordance with such virtues has been demonstrated to be a significant influence within moral decisions in the workplace. In addition, the analysis of virtues in terms of justice and care has enabled an additional perspective on virtue theory in terms of demonstrating how Gilligan's theory relating to the way males and females argue ethically can be translated into males and females tending to refer to justice-orientated or care-orientated virtues according to their gender.

Fourthly, it is clear that this project supports the theory that men and women do approach moral decisions from differing perspectives, those of justice and of care. It is for others to draw conclusions from this in relation to the nature of a particular workforce within an organisation and the involvement of different genders within its decision-making processes.

As stated previously, the aim of this research has not been to dissect the moral decision in the workplace, to discover patterns and seek to explain

them. Rather, as a social constructionist project, the object has been to explore and *expose* informants' experiences in order to broaden our understanding of what is involved. As stated in a previous chapter, in the context of considering the nature of a constructionist scheme, it is the process of analysis which is the enlightenment rather than any specific conclusions. Thus, it is not the social constructionist's purpose to speculate on what is discovered and why it has occurred. It is sufficient to *describe* in a new and different way and to let that very description speak for itself while raising questions for future research. In doing this, it seeks to comply with the example given in other social constructionist projects such as those cited in Sarbin and Kitsuse (1995) previously. However, it does need to comply with certain tests identified as being appropriate for research with such a methodology and these are outlined next.

There are three questions which have been suggested by Denzin and Lincoln as a test of a social constructionist research project. Does the way in which the informants' stories have been captured and presented "make sense" to the reader? Do the issues which they raise add to the reader's existing knowledge about making moral decisions in the workplace? As a social constructionist project, it should seek to enlighten the reader by building on their existing knowledge base in such a way that it "makes sense" in the light of what was known before but adds some element of new information. A third test identified by Denzin and Lincoln asks the question of the research "Does it make a difference?" For example, might it stimulate or empower action for change as a result?

1. How this project "makes sense"

This question can be addressed at two different levels; firstly, in terms of getting to know the research informants and their stories and, secondly, in terms of the points being illuminated appearing to be a logical or "sensible" progression on what was known before about the subject, both intuitively and academically. Does what is being said about moral decisions in the workplace "strike a chord" with the reader?

To consider first the question of becoming familiar with the informants' stories, this project has walked a fine line between the need to expose what its informants were saying and the requirement to justify academically all aspects of the underpinning methodology and resultant methods. A specific example of this tension has been the decision not to re-write the informants' stories to any great extent because of the potential danger of directly imposing the researcher's interpretative framework upon what they were saying. While the quantitative approach remains dominant to work within this field, any project which uses an alternative methodology faces the need to be able to justify its ontology and epistemology and its consequent methods of exposing information sought. This inevitably means that the "rules" imposed on working with research informants can constrain the eventual format of presentation. I was keen that the informants should "own" their maps and, obviously, their stories and that these should be made available to the reader in a form which was as close to the *original* as possible. This is not to deny the inevitable researcher influence which takes place in any project of this kind and the introduction to this project presents a little of my background in order for the reader to be able to assess for herself the nature of any influence placed on the project. However, the question remains of whether, for example, Bob's cognitive map and his story about how he regularly cheats his company through claiming extra business miles for his car actually "make sense" to the reader. Is it really possible to get to know Bob through these two texts without the benefit of meeting him and seeing him? I maintain that the research methods have exposed his reasoning in a holistic way and that the texts speak for themselves. However, they are not easily accessible. For example, we do not write as we speak and the narratives needed to be transcribed honestly in relation to the way they were spoken. The written style, then, stands as a potential barrier to listening to the story. Considering his cognitive map, we can see easily that Bob is concerned about justice and fairness and is worried about his lack of honesty while wishing to justify it. What we do not have is a profile of Bob in terms of his age, employment, and other relevant factors. These facts have been subsumed into a general analysis of the informants' backgrounds to protect

their privacy and confidentiality. While this practice is necessary and very justifiable, it is another barrier to us getting to know Bob and the circumstances around the moral decision which he tells us about.

Moving on to the second aspect of the question of this project "making sense" to readers, the stories which the informants have brought relate to normal employment-related situations and paint a rich picture of everyday life in a wide range of work settings in the UK. The question remains of whether the pointers made by this project "make sense" in terms of providing a logical extension of knowledge. Does what has been found to be the case within the experience of these 16 individuals "strike a chord" with us as readers? I suggest that there are no issues which have emerged which cut across existing knowledge to the extent that they do not fit our pre-existing constructs of making a moral decision in the workplace. For example, all informants identified similar sources of influence within their cognitive maps and those might have been hypothesized with little difficulty (although, of course, they were not). The prevalence of the use of virtues supports our experience of most people wanting to be "good" in a virtuous way and, also, the motivation for being "good" being found within the roles within which they function. While emotions have traditionally been treated as non-rational and therefore to be sidelined wherever possible, this project has highlighted our use of emotions within the context of a moral decision as being a relevant factor to take into account but within a rational perspective. In other words, these 16 informants kept a healthy balance between the influence of their emotions and other aspects and issues within their situations. Finally, this project "makes sense" to all employees who have been faced with difficulties within the power relationship with their employers in the way that it highlights the tensions within that relationship and the influence of the organisation on moral decisions being made.

2. How this project adds to existing knowledge

Next I seek to answer the question of how this research project has added to existing knowledge. There are five different areas where I argue that it has

contributed an addition to existing knowledge which relate to the nature of a decision, the influence of membership of communities within a moral decision, the philosophical perspective of virtue theory, the role of emotions and the usefulness of cognitive mapping as a potential research tool.

(a) Nature of a decision

Against literature reviewed relating to the structures of decisions and the particular models offered for making moral decisions in the workplace, this project has highlighted the nebulous nature of such decisions. There is no process, only a gathering of ideas, information, influences and a continuing sense-making of these. At some points it was difficult to identify an actual decision, at others, the same decision was being made on a regular basis. In one example, Angela went into a meeting having determined to take one action and found herself taking another. This glimpse of 16 decisions has served to emphasise the lack of structure involved. It would be difficult to pull out common factors which could point towards a process. Similarly, it would appear that each of the 16 individuals involved in this project deals with his or her decision in a different way appropriate to his or her own circumstances. While I have not sought to make any assessment on the relative *quality* of the decisions explored, it is clear that each informant has come to their own conclusion in a reasoned fashion. Having said that, the fact that we were dealing with *historical* decisions meant that the individuals had the opportunity to impose a rationale subsequent to the decision being made. This only serves to emphasise the unpredictability of the nature of the process of making moral decisions in the workplace.

(b) Relative influence of membership of communities

While not unanticipated, it was a pleasant surprise to find all 16 informants identifying similar sources of influence within their decisions. What is of particular interest is the *relative* nature of the influence. The fact that the organisation prevailed over the group process as did the influence of the values of individuals offers new insights on the influences within the making of a moral decision in a work setting. Underpinning this discovery has been

the innovative research method devised for this project in using the potential arithmetic of the graphic elements of cognitive mapping. Giving informants three choices in relation to the relative strengths of the influences served to provide the mathematical evidence required in order to ascertain the dominant influences.

(c) Virtue theory as theory in use

While the overall deontological perspective of the majority of informants complied with existing literature, the surprise came from the very clear message from informants that virtue theory is useful and used and in a way which can fit with the theoretical teleological perspective placed on it. Concepts expressed within the cognitive maps and the narratives were demonstrated to comply with MacIntyre's interpretation of virtue theory as relating to the promotion of the internal "good" of a "practice".

(d) Role of emotions

The way in which informants related their emotions within their cognitive maps to other constructs has shed new light on how we work with our emotions in moral decisions. This has already been described in more detail above in considering the question of whether the work of this project "makes sense". Not only does the exposure of the place which emotions have within moral decisions make sense but it is a new revelation to see evidence of how emotions are treated in practice.

(e) The effectiveness of cognitive mapping

While cognitive mapping has not been used before to map moral decisions in the workplace, this study serves to demonstrate the effectiveness of cognitive mapping in enabling an analysis of the decision being explored. The use of graphic features to assess the relative strengths of influence within a decision has added another tool to the menu of research methods and enabled the subsequent mathematics around the balance of the decision. This, in turn, led to the identification of the dilemmas where the "scores" between individual

and organisational influences were near to perfect balance. A further strength of the cognitive mapping process related to its use as a strong interviewing tool. It enabled me to work with the informant to gather all relevant information and allow disorder where that existed and reflect order where there was an identified logic by the informant herself.

While the above five elements of the project all add to existing knowledge, I have previously maintained that the project itself in seeking to take a holistic view of its subject also adds an element of additional knowledge as a whole.

3. How this project makes a difference

The third question to be answered relates to how this project makes a difference. This is addressed by recognising that its impact will differ according to whether it relates to an academic or a practitioner context. Taking the academic point of reference first, in seeking to investigate an area of knowledge that has previously been treated through a quantitative approach, this project demonstrates that rigorous research can still be effected through the use of qualitative methods, provided that they are used within the discipline set by the methodology. Qualitative methods ensure that the differences between individuals can be expressed and taken account of in a much more holistic way than the quantitative approach. In this respect, this project seeks to promote such methods as being more suitable for use in research within a business ethics framework.

I turn now to the difference this project can make within the context of a practitioner. What can an employer or employee do differently as a result of this research? The findings of this research raise a number of issues relating to practical steps which can be applied in the workplace.

(a) The use of cognitive mapping

The first point relates to the use of cognitive mapping. This proved to be a very helpful tool in enabling informants to recall the detail of their moral

decision within the context of an interview with the researcher. Indeed, informants appeared to enjoy and appreciate the process and indicated that, as a result, they understood the nature of the situation they presented better. This raises the question of whether it would be suitable for exploring *current* moral decisions. If someone is in the "horns of a dilemma", it could be useful to be able to understand where the "messages" are coming from, their individual strength and a little more about how they relate one to the other. This would need some development work to explore the potential of using cognitive mapping in this way. However, while I was using computer software, the method is just as effective using a piece of paper and a pen, once one understands the basic process of identifying constructs, their underpinning influence and their relationship to the decision.

(b) A new context for training in ethical behaviour

It was quite clear that the project's informants were very aware of what was acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the workplace. At the same time, no reference was made to any written code of conduct. Previous research (for example, Baron (1998)) has demonstrated that many employees find such codes irrelevant and unhelpful because of their lack of specificity. MacIntyre's analysis of the virtues in terms of working towards the *goods* inherent in a particular *practice* raises issues in relation to the content of training for different roles within business. The values and virtues that the informants declared in many cases related to their perceived model of behaviour within the role which they fulfilled. Both Neil's and Joanne's stories confirmed this when examined closely in relation to the pertinence of virtue theory. It therefore follows that if one is seeking to influence employees' ethical behaviour, the place to do it is within a training session specifically for their job role where there is an opportunity to explore appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and underpinning values and virtues. This is probably common practice within existing training establishments or departments but the significance of such an exercise is highlighted by this research. It should give additional confidence to practitioners that this is a necessary part of any training programme related to particular roles in the

workplace, whether it is learning good practice as a managing director or how to fulfil the role of shop steward.

(c) Individual and organisation ethical "fit"

Finally, this project serves to raise awareness of, on the one side, the potential strength of individual values and, on the other, the nature of the power relationship between employer and employee. Because of the nature of the strength of individual values, there needs to be an opportunity for an assessment of "fit" by a new recruit into an organisation by both sides. The individual needs to feel morally "comfortable" within the business in order to prevent the possibility of finding themselves within a possible "whistle-blowing" situation, both for their own sake and that of the business.

Returning to Joanne, her dilemma demonstrated the nature of the tension between employee and employer in terms of the fear generated by the power relationship that exists between an individual and the organisation for which they work. If this project raises awareness of the nature of that relationship to any degree, then it has "made a difference" in terms of alerting the reader to the potential harm which can be suffered by individual employees within the employer relationship.

In summary, learning from 16 informants who have shared their experiences of making moral decisions in the workplace, we are left with a picture of a decision-making framework which is not a given process, which contains certain common influences which, in themselves, have the capacity to cause tensions if they are in conflict. At the same time, individuals seek to follow the virtues that they find implicit within the role which they fulfil at work. Moral decisions in a business setting are made within the context of a relationship between employer and employee which, at the extreme, is based on power and fear, the power deriving from the fact that the employer provides the employee with a living and the fear from the possibility of losing that living. This project has served to draw attention to the potential dangers and problems when this relationship is exploited. It has also promoted the

significance of the consideration of the required ethical elements of the performance of any role in business alongside the skills and knowledge required while raising a number of questions for further research and development in the future.

Appendix A

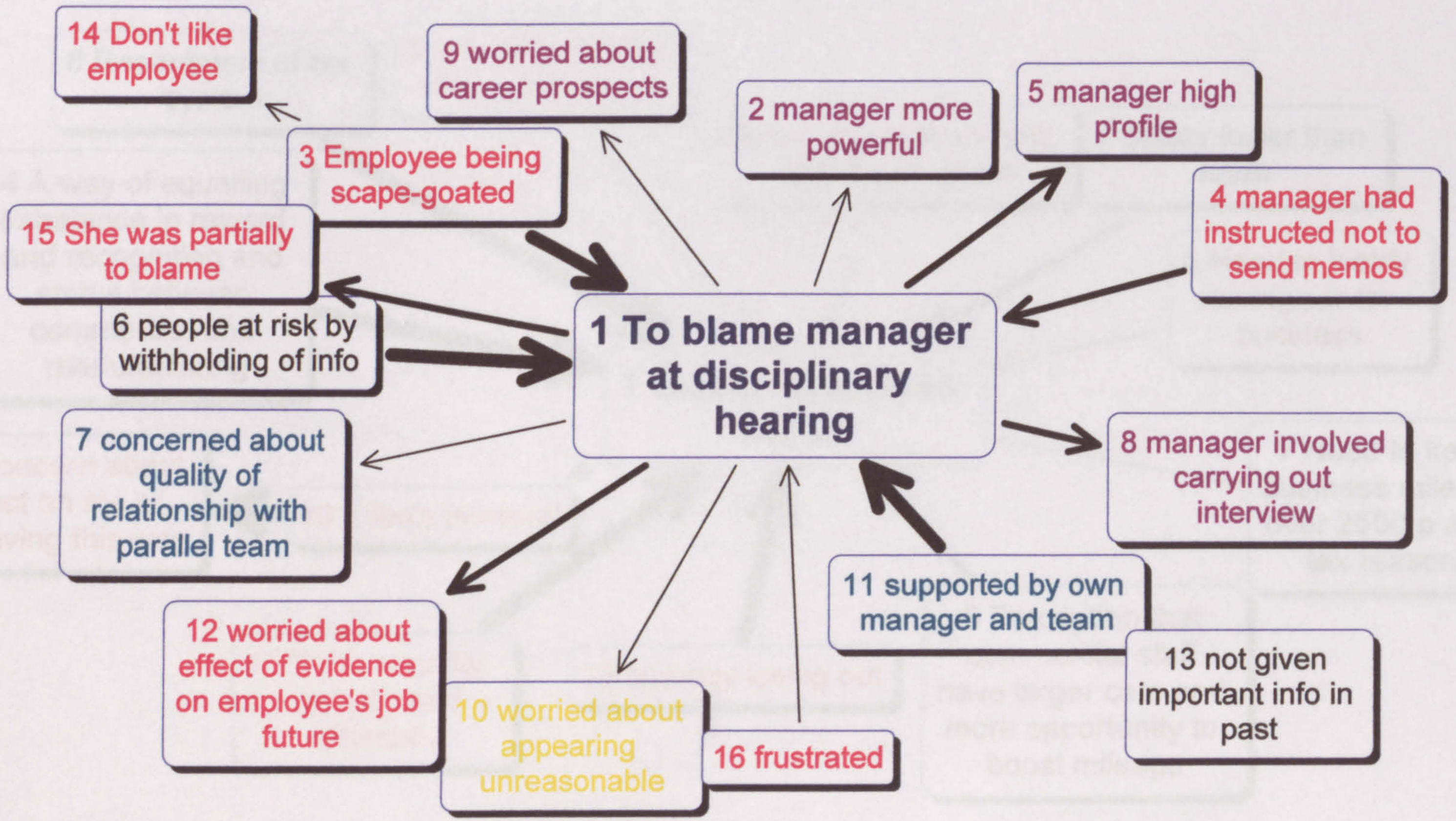
Informants' cognitive maps

(Information given below in *italics* is my summary of each informant's situation.)

Angela	To blame manager at disciplinary hearing. *Angela is an environmental health officer who has concerns about a site locally and a colleague's apparent failure to take sufficient action. Giving evidence at her colleague's disciplinary hearing she has to decide where to lay the blame.*
Bob	Boost business miles. *Bob admits that he regularly cheats his employers in making a false claim for miles driven on business.*
Colin	Whether to negotiate an illegal compensation from a contracting company. *Colin describes the insolvency of a supplying company which re-forms leaving a number of creditors unpaid but which then offers an illegal payment to his employing company. He has to decide whether to accept this and negotiate on behalf of his employers or not.*
Don	To bend the rules to give preference to someone in an appointments process. *Don is involved in a major restructuring within his employing organisation and is keen that the best person for a particular post is appointed despite it going against stated organisational procedures.*
Edith	To publicise a politically sensitive report. *Edith is the finance director of a health organisation who is concerned about what is happening with regards to a fellow director's appointment in the light of a secret future restructuring. She decides to fax the confidential report to the person offered the appointment.*
Frederick	Recommend refusal on grounds of inadequate access. *Frederick is a local authority highways engineer who decides to go against a planning recommendation because of his concerns about access to the site.*
Gaynor	Not to instigate grievance procedure against line manager. *Gaynor is a public sector middle manager who is being severely bullied by her female boss.*

Helen	How hard to try in a collection for the boss – average. *Helen has had a difficult relationship with her boss and is then expected to enthusiastically collect for a leaving present for her.*
Isabel	To report a wrong procedure for a vacancy. *Isabel is employed in human resources and is concerned about the way an internal vacancy has been filled.*
Joanne	Not to tell employees known information around their TUPE transfers. *As a human resources officer, Joanne is faced with knowing more than she can tell about the potential detrimental effects on personnel as they transfer to another employer.*
Ken	Reporting problems with data to funders. *As a manager in a college of further education, Ken is concerned to be honest about anomalies he discovers relating to data used to obtain funding.*
Leo	Not to back a colleague in a risky decision. *Leo decides not to support a friend who is also a fellow manager in the company when he asks his colleagues to follow him in taking industrial action against their employer.*
Mark	To overrule stated redundancy policy. *Mark is a union representative who is faced with a question of who to support in relation to redundancies within their organisation.*
Neil	To treat one colleague the same as others. *Neil is newly appointed to his management position and is faced with problems in implementing change in working practices when a former colleague (and friend) complains to him about his treatment of her.*
Owen	To apply for job currently doing. *Owen finds his way through a potential conflict of interest in being a union representative and also wanting to apply for a particular job vacancy.*
Penny	To try to persuade colleague to consider return to post. *Penny is managing a department where a member of staff has given notice of her intention to leave but whose partner is indicating that the post should be kept open for her while she recovers from a mental breakdown.*

Angela



Decision

Prof value

Org influence

Societal value

280

Peer influence

Personal value

Bob

8 Resentment of tax system

3 Acceptance that other people do it

9 Employers know and choose to ignore

2 Salary lower than norm

4 A way of equalling imbalance in reward and recognition and status between commercial and manufacturing

6 Need to justify having car for business

1 Boost business miles

12 Concern about effect on me of behaving this way

10 It feels immoral

7 Need to keep business mileage over 2500 p a for tax reasons

11 Want equality, internally and externally

13 Nobody losing out

5 Perception that commercial staff have larger cars and more opportunity to boost mileage

Conform to all els

Perc of ext comp

Decision

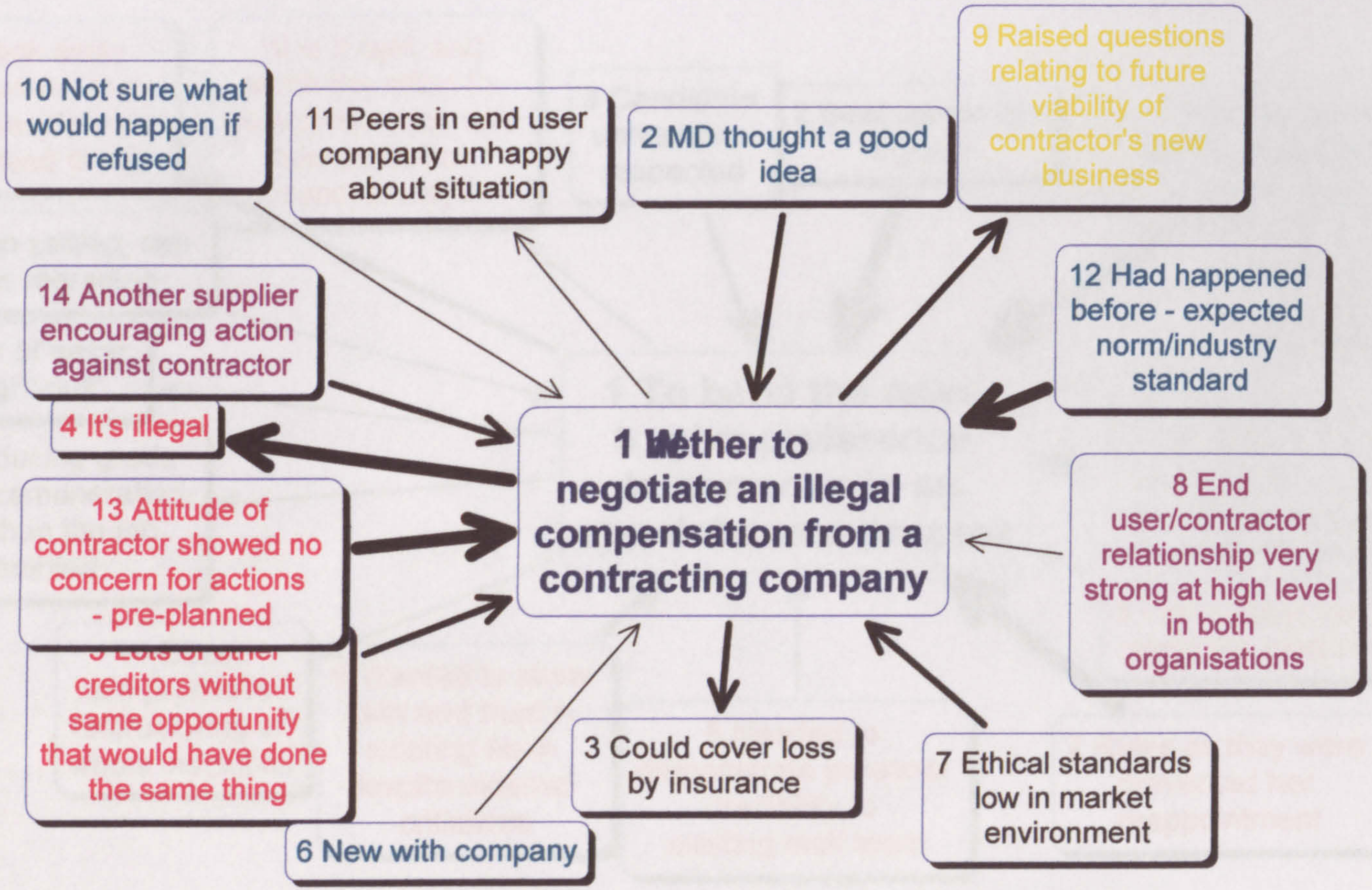
Perc of org

Ind vals to tax

281

Ind values/upbring

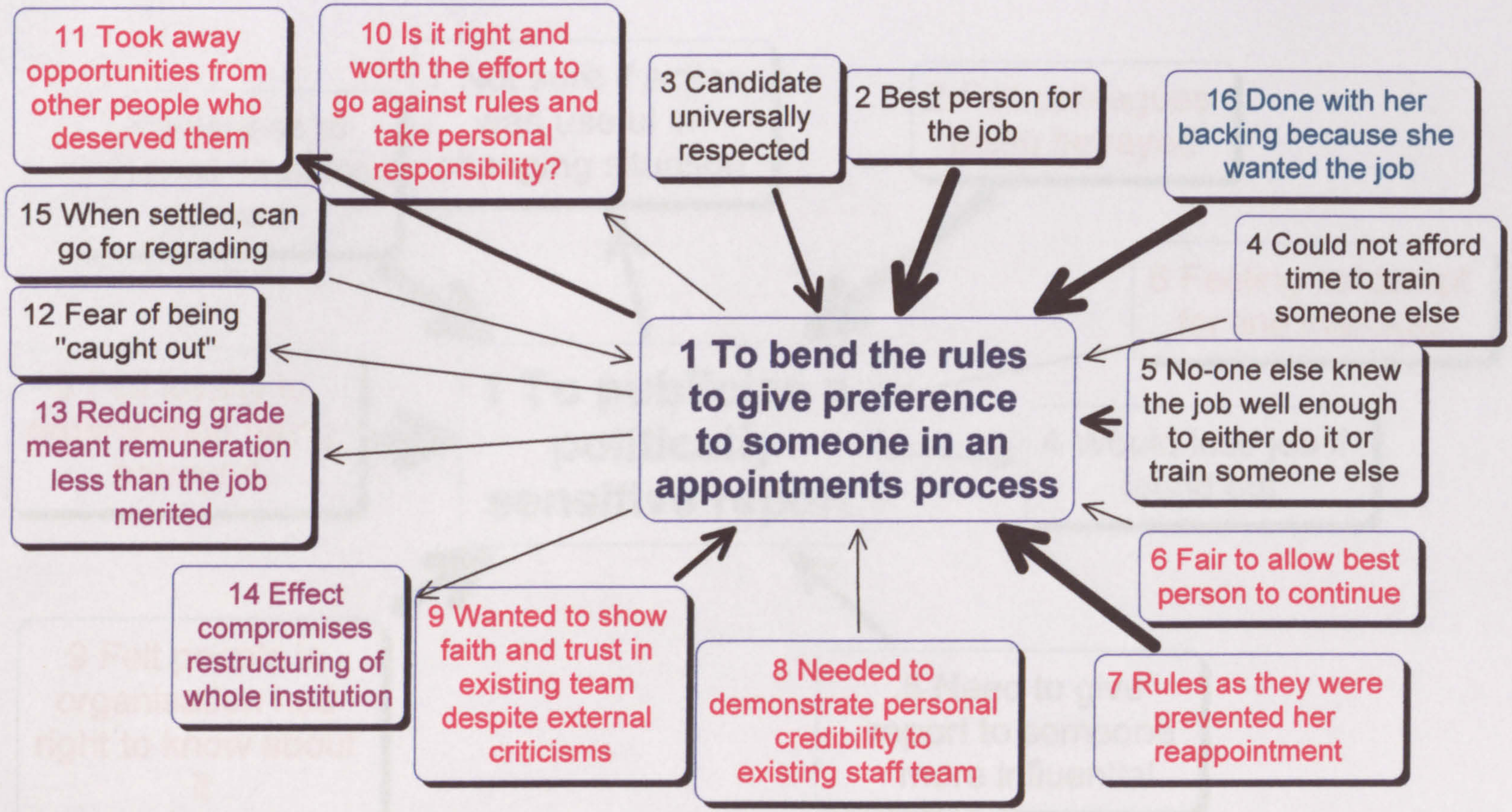
Colin



Decision | External industry | External source | Own organisation

Personal values | Pro standards

Don


11 Took away opportunities from other people who deserved them
10 Is it right and worth the effort to go against rules and take personal responsibility?
3 Candidate universally respected
2 Best person for the job
16 Done with her backing because she wanted the job
15 When settled, can go for regrading
4 Could not afford time to train someone else
12 Fear of being "caught out"
1 To bend the rules to give preference to someone in an appointments process
5 No-one else knew the job well enough to either do it or train someone else
13 Reducing grade meant remuneration less than the job merited
6 Fair to allow best person to continue
14 Effect compromises restructuring of whole institution
9 Wanted to show faith and trust in existing team despite external criticisms
8 Needed to demonstrate personal credibility to existing staff team
7 Rules as they were prevented her reappointment

Edith

3 Powerless to influence situation on own

7 Not sure if action was useful in changing situation

2 Felt colleagues being betrayed

6 Feeling contempt for line manager

8 Felt loyalty to organisation being betrayed

1 To publicise a politically sensitive report

4 Would lose job if found out

9 Felt people in organisation had right to know about it

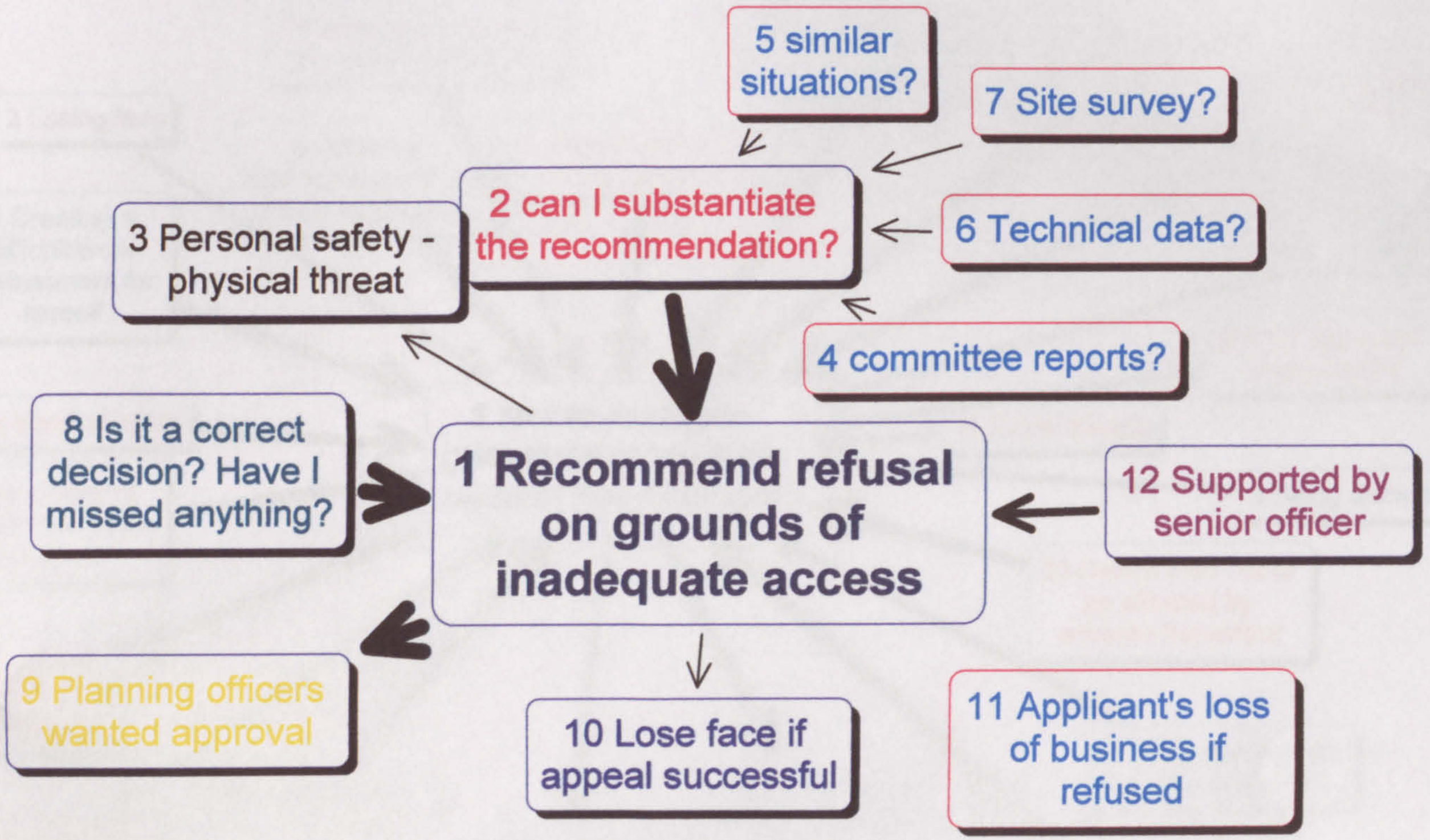
5 Need to give report to someone more influential

Decision

Individual values

Organisa/values

Frederick



Decision

Personal/individ

Respected sen off

285

Deptal framework

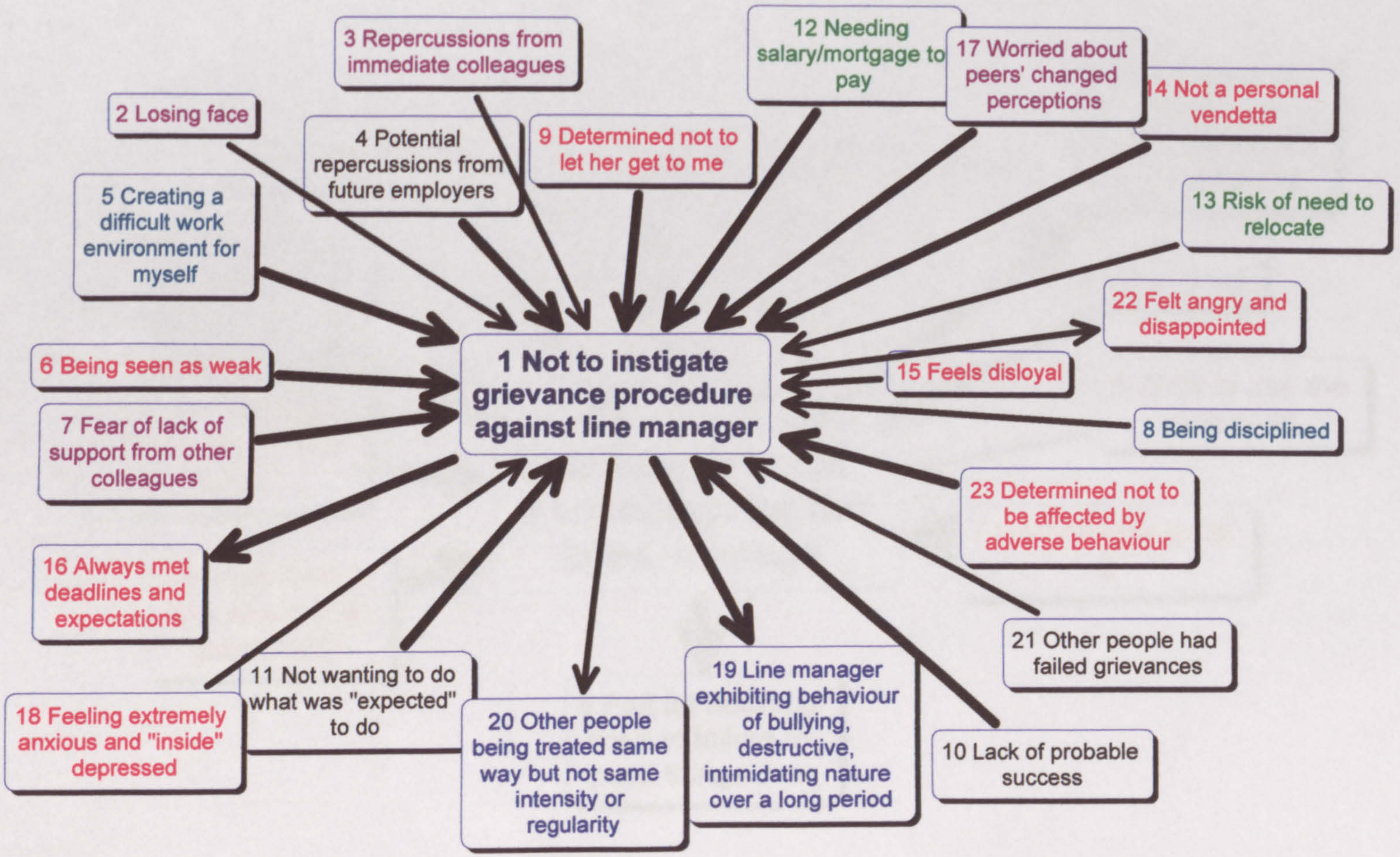
Prof know & exp

Standard

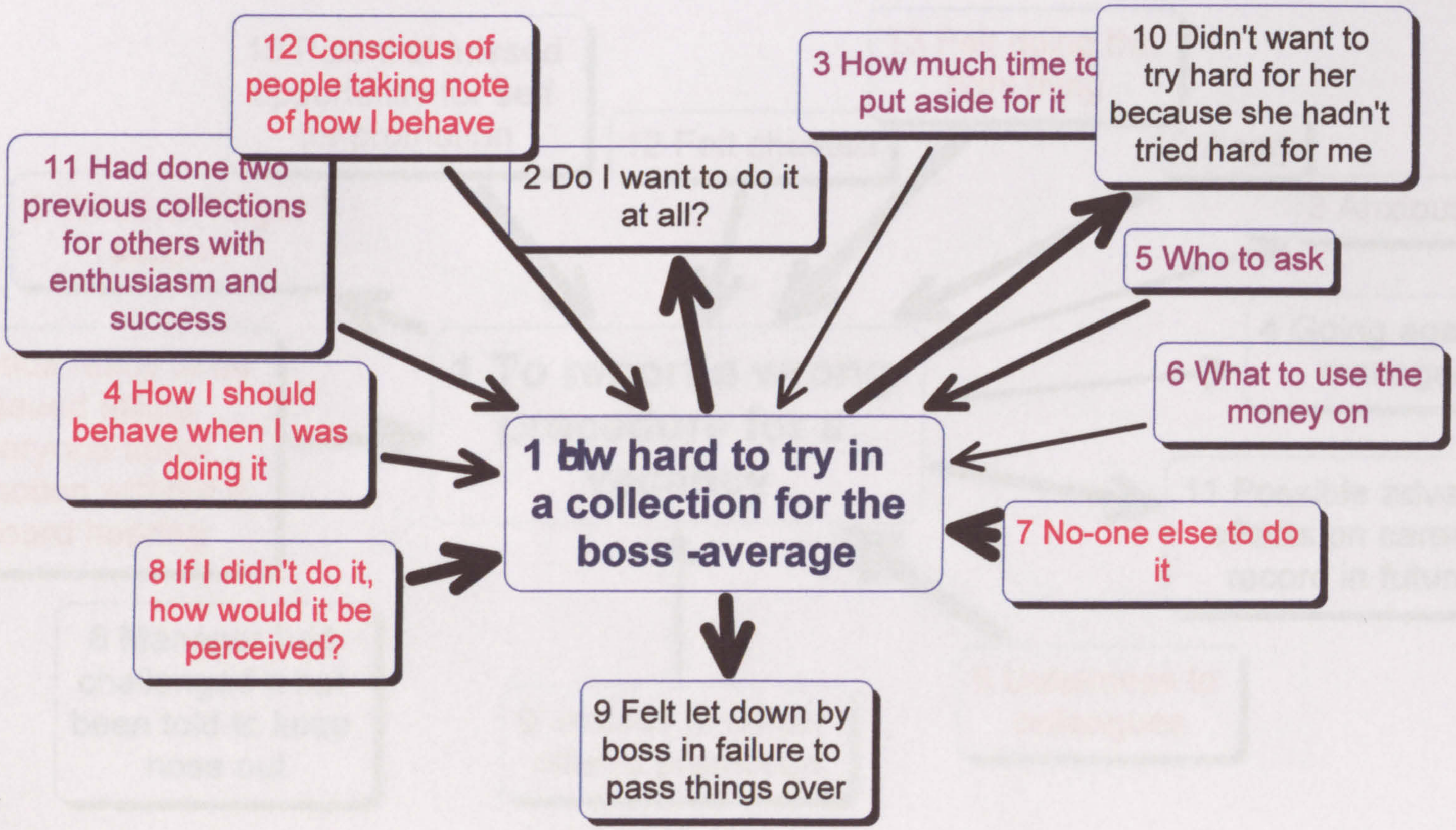
Org framework

Professional pride

Gaynor


3 Repercussions from immediate colleagues
12 Needing salary/mortgage to pay
17 Worried about peers' changed perceptions
14 Not a personal vendetta
2 Losing face
4 Potential repercussions from future employers
9 Determined not to let her get to me
5 Creating a difficult work environment for myself
13 Risk of need to relocate
22 Felt angry and disappointed
6 Being seen as weak
1 Not to instigate grievance procedure against line manager
15 Feels disloyal
7 Fear of lack of support from other colleagues
8 Being disciplined
23 Determined not to be affected by adverse behaviour
16 Always met deadlines and expectations
21 Other people had failed grievances
11 Not wanting to do what was "expected" to do
19 Line manager exhibiting behaviour of bullying, destructive, intimidating nature over a long period
18 Feeling extremely anxious and "inside" depressed
20 Other people being treated same way but not same intensity or regularity
10 Lack of probable success

Helen



Decision

Views of peers

287

Individual

Senior managers

Isabel

Decision

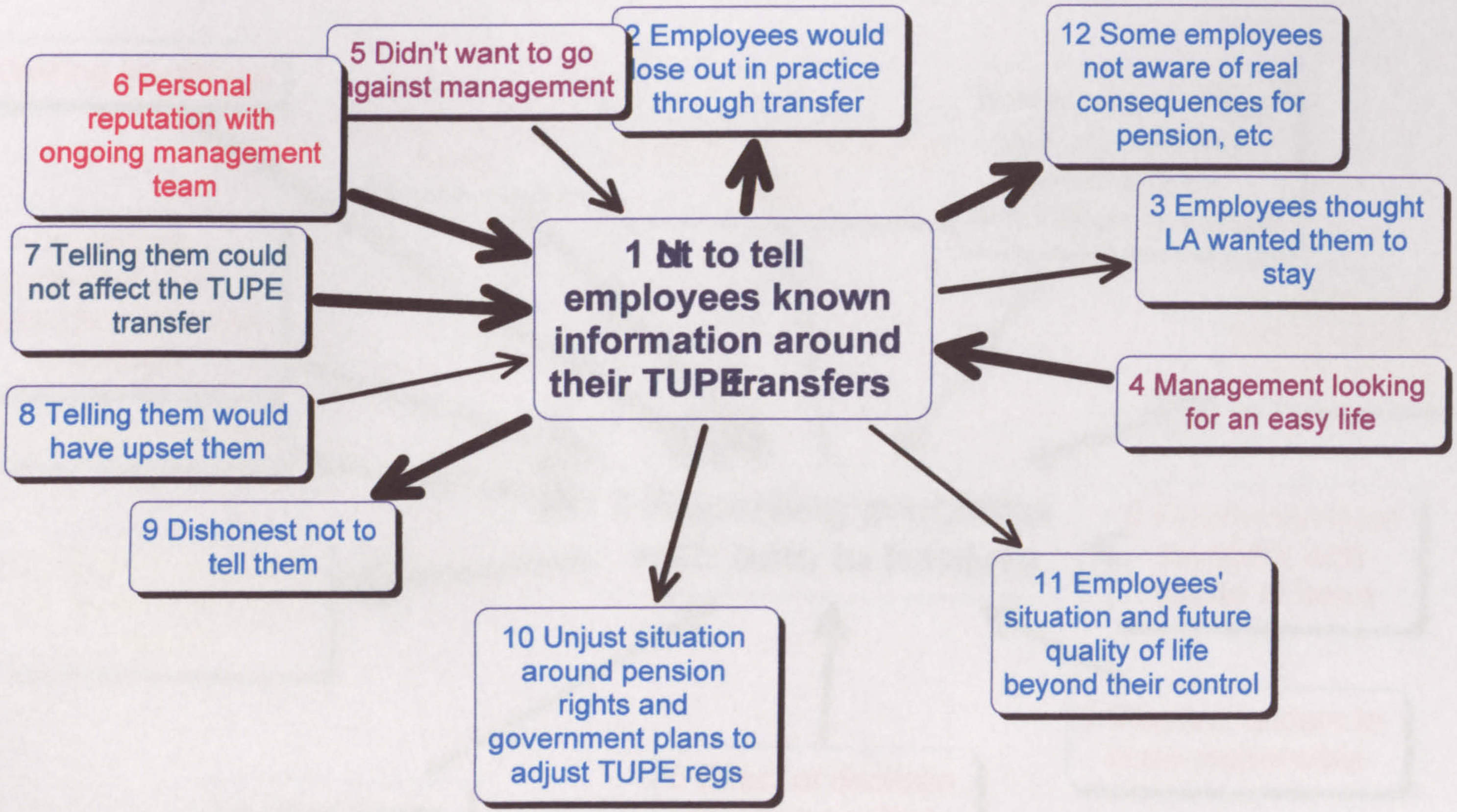
standard

Org culture

Org policies

Own emotion

Joanne



Decision

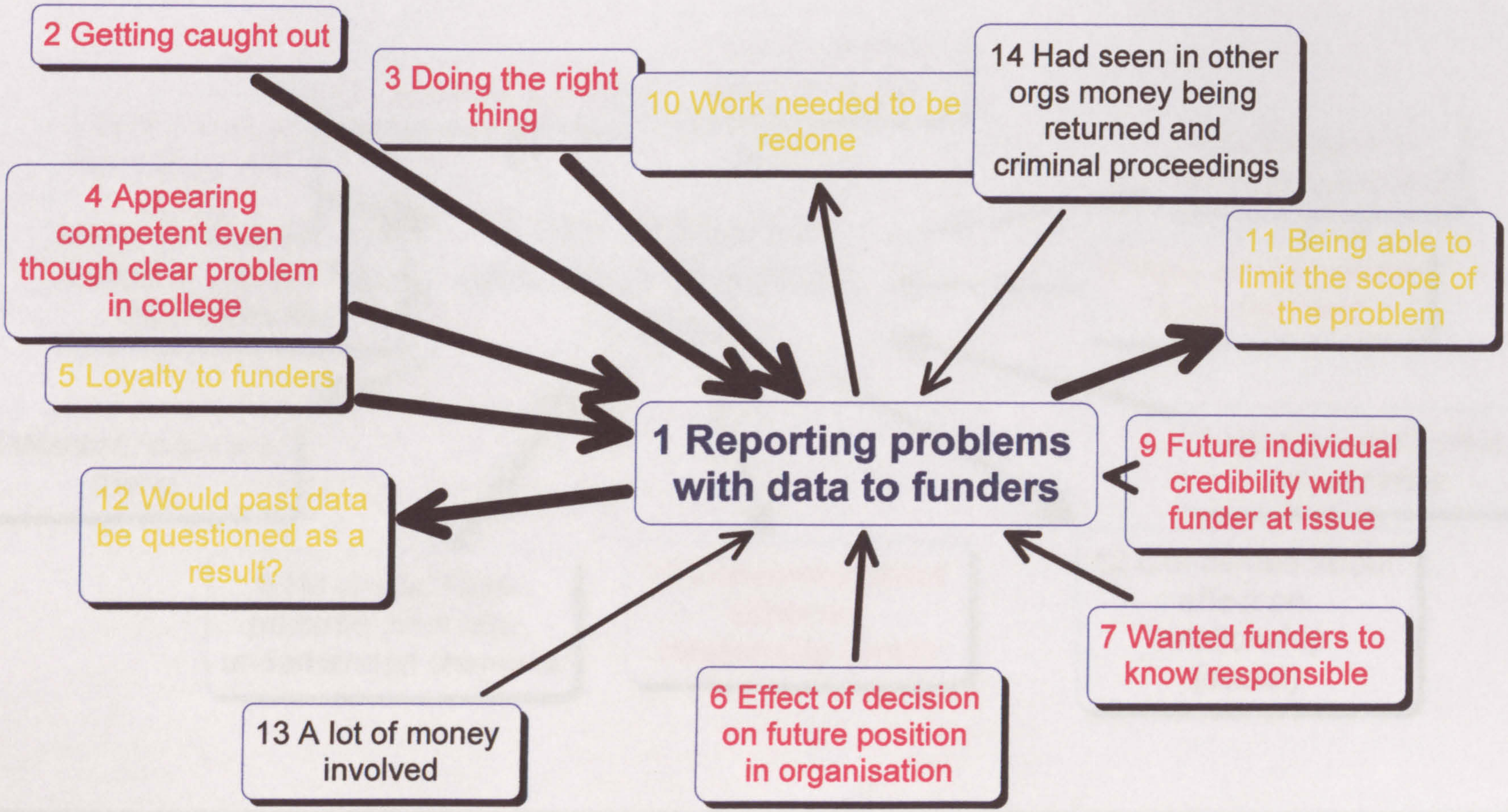
Senior management

Own values

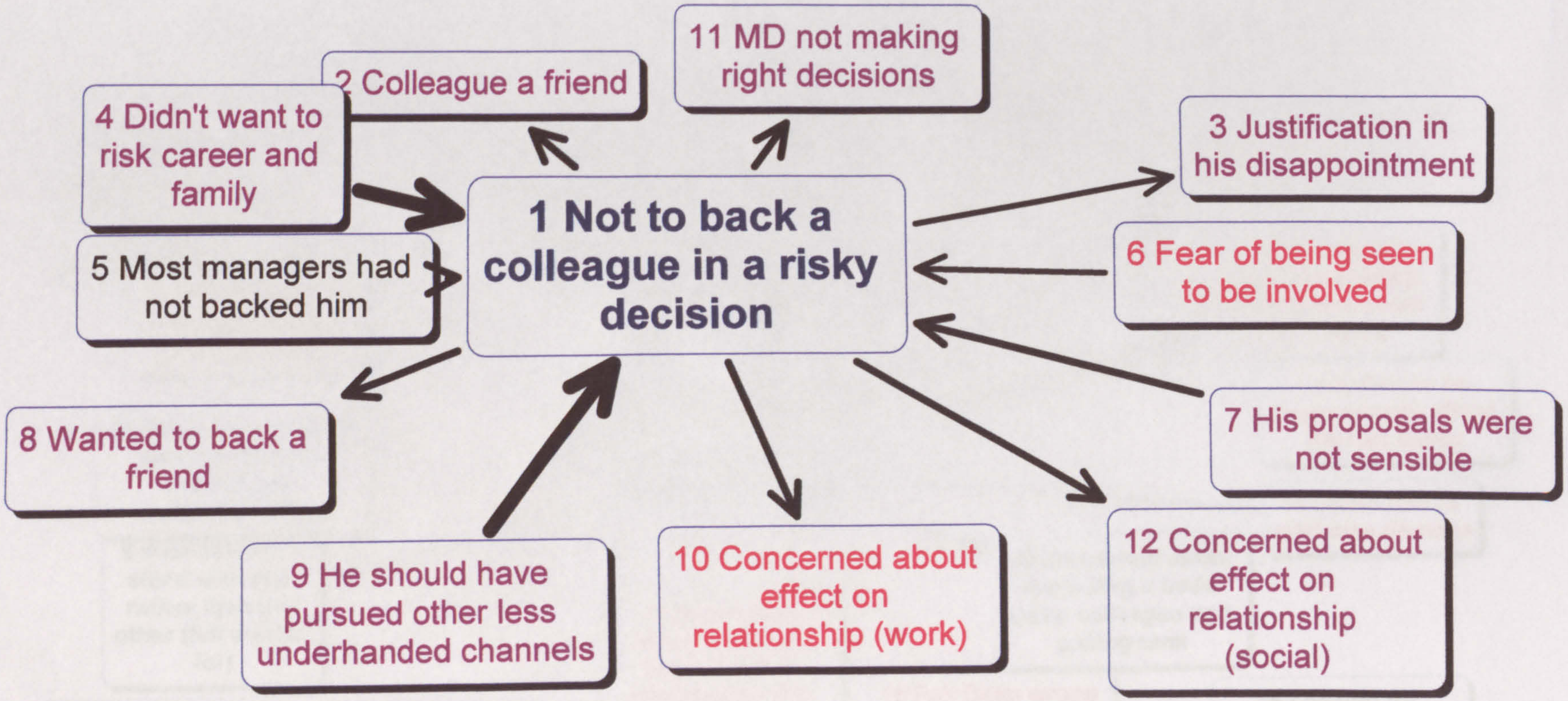
Society

Self interest

Ken


2 Getting caught out
3 Doing the right thing
10 Work needed to be redone
14 Had seen in other orgs money being returned and criminal proceedings
4 Appearing competent even though clear problem in college
11 Being able to limit the scope of the problem
5 Loyalty to funders
1 Reporting problems with data to funders
9 Future individual credibility with funder at issue
12 Would past data be questioned as a result?
7 Wanted funders to know responsible
13 A lot of money involved
6 Effect of decision on future position in organisation

Leo



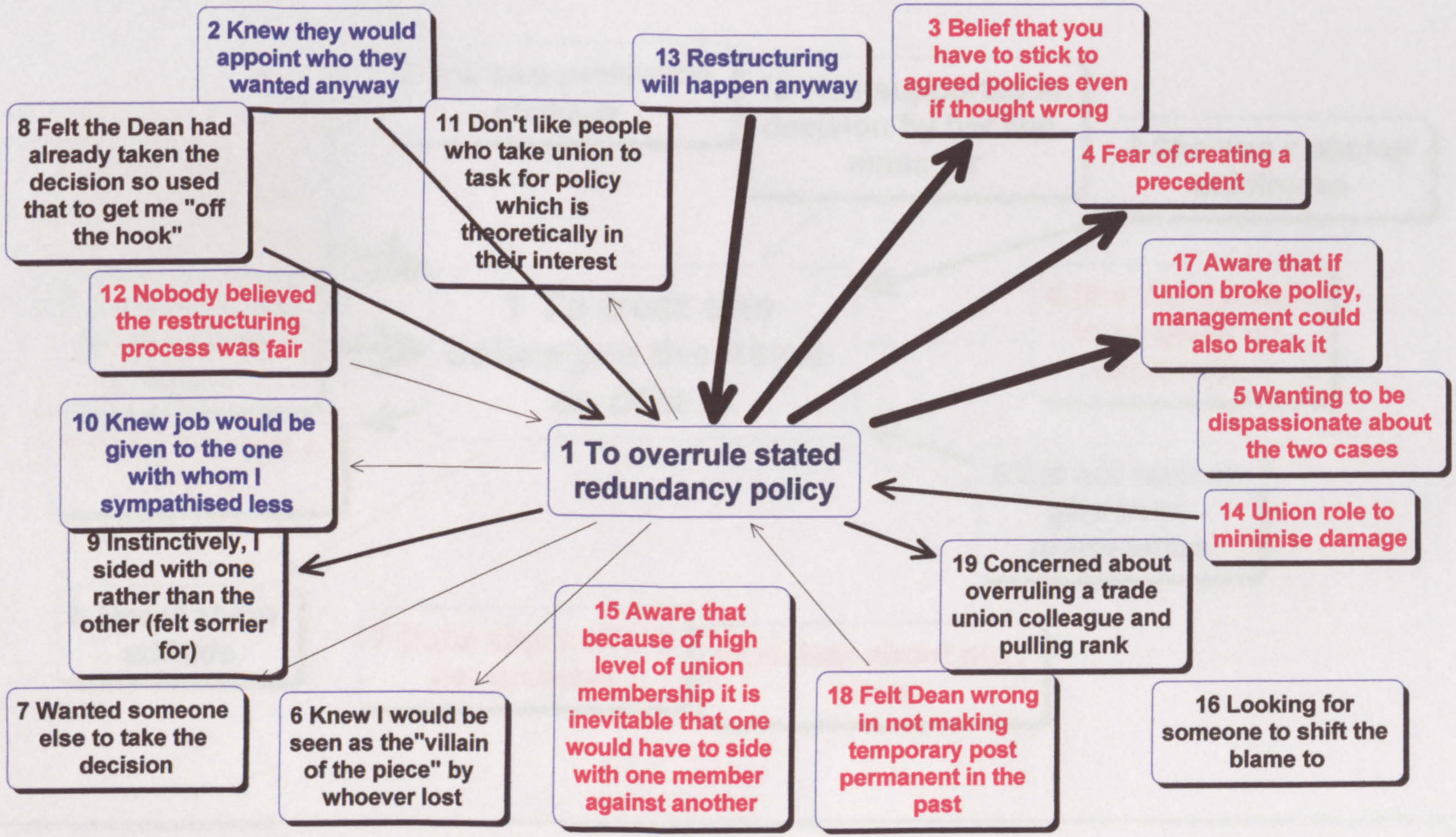
Decision

Personal view

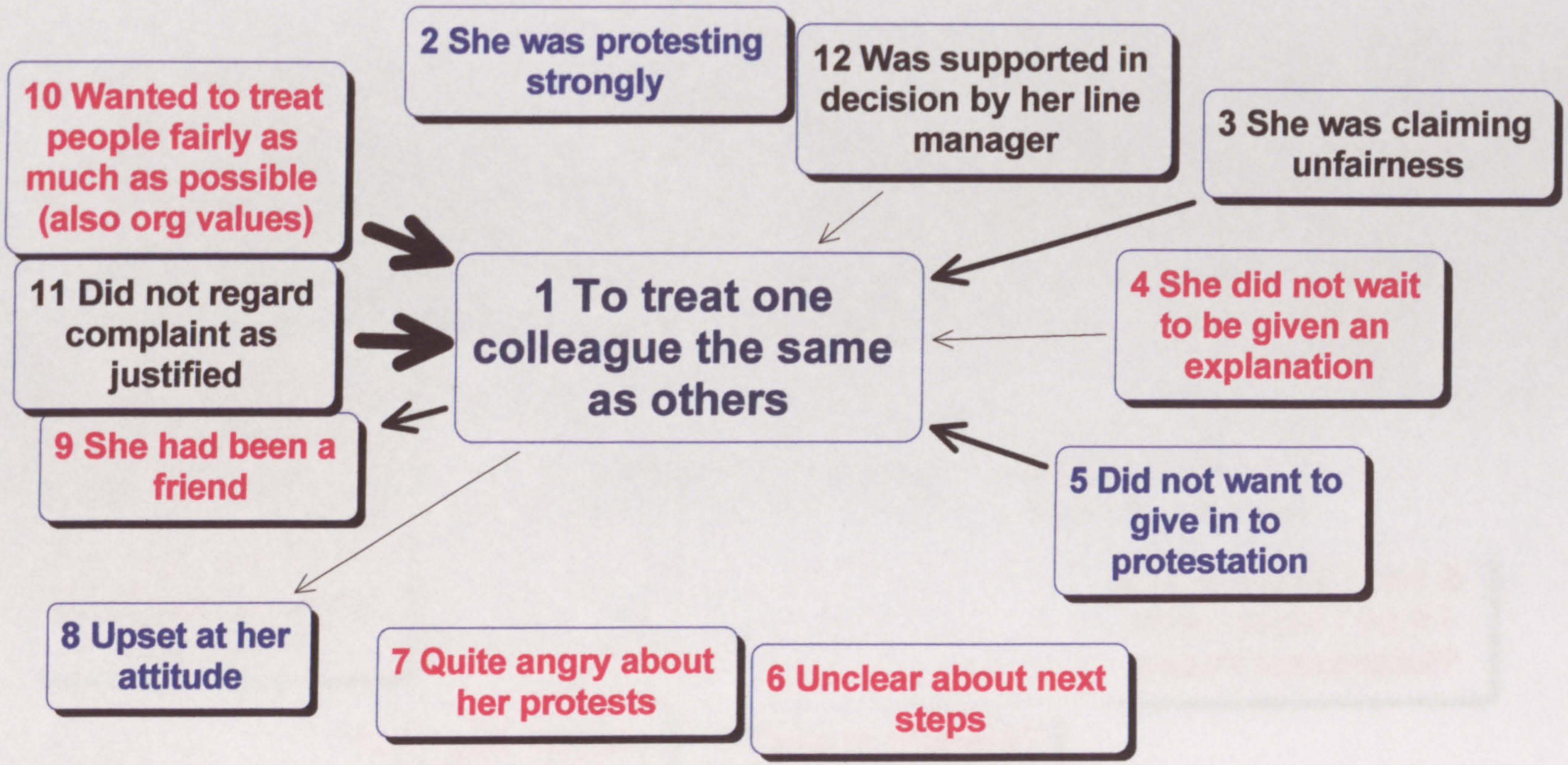
Hierarchy pressure

Peer pressure

Mark


2 Knew they would appoint who they wanted anyway
13 Restructuring will happen anyway
3 Belief that you have to stick to agreed policies even if thought wrong
8 Felt the Dean had already taken the decision so used that to get me "off the hook"
11 Don't like people who take union to task for policy which is theoretically in their interest
4 Fear of creating a precedent
12 Nobody believed the restructuring process was fair
17 Aware that if union broke policy, management could also break it
10 Knew job would be given to the one with whom I sympathised less
5 Wanting to be dispassionate about the two cases
1 To overrule stated redundancy policy
14 Union role to minimise damage
9 Instinctively, I sided with one rather than the other (felt sorrier for)
19 Concerned about overruling a trade union colleague and pulling rank
15 Aware that because of high level of union membership it is inevitable that one would have to side with one member against another
7 Wanted someone else to take the decision
6 Knew I would be seen as the"villain of the piece" by whoever lost
18 Felt Dean wrong in not making temporary post permanent in the past
16 Looking for someone to shift the blame to

Neil



Aca prof values

Org framework

Decision

293

Individual values

Owen

13 Opportunity to exert influence

2 Senior management job

10 Only chance for career development in near future

3 Union activist

9 Didn't want to cross any future picket line

4 Would not be union activist if appointed

8 Might I be expected to make someone redundant?

1 To apply for job currently doing

5 Could I do it?

11 Asking people to do things I wouldn't want to do

6 How would I feel & what would I do if I wasn't successful?

12 If I got the job, less time for research

7 Time to prepare?

Penny

6 Difficulty of playing go between between colleague and partner

2 Desire to hold on to colleague who was valuable to dept

3 Desire to take into consideration extenuating circumstances

4 Desire to accommodate what seemed a genuine plea from an interested party

1 To try to persuade colleague to consider return to post

7 Difficulty of hiding the extenuating circumstance knowledge gained about the colleague from her and other colleagues

8 Taking a gamble on fact that post would not have been re-filled by a new full-time member of staff

5 Desire to influence colleague herself in returning ultimately

Decision

Organisation

Individual values

Individual/peers

Appendix B:

Transcription of interview with Angela

A: OK the thing I thought about to talk about was quite a complex situation so I thought I'd better try and explain it. It involves – part of my job involves dealing with land that is contaminated and in particular landfill sites which you might have read about there's been quite a lot of publicity about landfill gas that can sometimes migrate off these sites and in looking at one particular site I became a bit concerned about the possibility of there being very high levels of gas on this one particular site in our area and I discovered that another person working for the council had known about this situation for a considerable period of time. She does a similar type of job to me – in a lot of respects we're very different but in this sense our roles are quite similar but she hadn't let me know and when I wanted to try and find information out to try and find out exactly what was going on she refused to give me the information. There was reports and so on that had been produced that she had got copies of but wouldn't let me have them and I tried for weeks to get hold of information getting more and more concerned. It finally turned out that in fact the gas was actually very high and actually migrating off the site towards some houses so through not letting me having the information she was potentially, I felt, putting those people at risk because we should have really known about it to make sure that nobody's property was affected and not at risk. The situation sort of went on from there and I eventually felt that I had to raise it with her manager well in fact two managers above her in fact – I went right up to the head of service in the end. And had no joy with him either and sort of became quite frustrated and ended up quite a lot of subterfuge writing notes on my computer and confidential file notes for myself so that I had a record of what was going on because I was getting more and more concerned about it and then the next thing I heard was that she'd been – that this particular officer had been suspended and they asked me to go along and, well they didn't tell me she had been suspended they said

they wanted me to go and have a chat with her manager and the personnel officer and it subsequently turned out that they were looking to take disciplinary action against her and they wanted me to, I don't know how to express it really, to use this example as one piece of evidence against her and the person conducting the interview was this particular manager who I'd also had a bit of a problem actually getting through to as well so I was then faced with a decision do I tell the whole truth and really drop her in it or do I blame the manager or you know it was a real dilemma because you don't know what sort of stance to take because I felt she was really wrong in what she'd done and I felt he was wrong because he didn't do anything to sort the problem out and it was do you drop her in it? Do you drop him in it and jeopardise your own position because he's in a much more senior position than I am and potentially could do my career damage or whatever. I felt that was quite an ethical dilemma, well the whole situation was how to deal with it, but it is quite complicated. I don't know if that's too involved.

CK: No, that's fine, that's good. How long ago are we talking about?

A: It's quite recent, I basically I did blame him and I said that I felt that it was down to him, that I had told him what was going on. I thought she was wrong in what she had done but that in other respects, other contact I had had with her she'd been. She's a very aggressive person, she is very difficult to deal with so I tried to avoid saying anything subjective and tried to keep it just to that particular issue but I did end up saying that I thought he was responsible because you know he had been advised about it and I thought that you know the head of service should have reeled her in really. He should have sorted it out and he sanctioned it as far as I was concerned but it didn't go down well at all. Since that time I would say the relationship between not just me and him but my whole section and his section has deteriorated really so it has had quite a lasting impact. But I felt I have said the right thing and I felt like I haven't been. . . . I felt otherwise I was going to get dragged in to sort of . . . I felt like they were using her as a scapegoat. I felt it didn't just stop at her – it went to a higher level. She was getting the rap for either

something they knowingly went along with or that they failed to control really. They were aware of the situation.

CK: Was it one of their sites?

A: Yes – it's not actually owned by the Council but the Council wants to redevelop the whole area so they didn't want us to have the information because they knew we'd say they couldn't redevelop it so there was a bit of a vested interest as well. It's not actually owned by the Council but if that site couldn't be redeveloped the rest of the Council scheme would have fallen apart and there was a lot of political will for that to go through so they were trying to sort of conceal how serious it was really. So it was a bit iffy as well I felt you know to do that because somebody might either have ended up living by it you know even closer to it because they were planning to redevelop it. So it's quite complicated but I mean I am just trying to sort of summarise it really and hope it makes sense.

CK: Yes – it does make sense. What happened to her?

A: Well, it's still sort of going on and I think . . .

CK: What, she's sort of under a warning or something is she?

A: Well this is another problem in that he didn't really tell me what the purpose of the interview was. I sort of found out through other sources that it was a disciplinary thing. They said "oh, this is just a chat, we're taping it and we're writing it all on our keyboards but you don't have to worry about it but you might have to come and give evidence at the tribunal" and it wasn't really clear what the position was but it turns out that they are looking to take disciplinary action. They're just trying to get enough evidence together and that was a position I felt very uncomfortable with really. But having said that, I couldn't say I had had a good relationship with her so there was an element of me that thought "well, yes, she is difficult to deal with, she is, you know, she has acted unprofessionally" and this sort of thing. But then I

thought it was wrong that they were sort of using her at her level to take the blame for something that I felt went a lot higher so it was quite difficult.

CK: Great – I am going to stop it there.

(Laptop computer set up with Decision Explorer software loaded)

CK: We're talking about influences – no we're talking about concepts in our head when we're thinking about a decision. Let's not think about influences at the moment.

A: So do you mean, so are we saying, I was concerned say if I blamed her manager that that might affect my career

CK: Yes

A: . . . prospects and that sort of thing because he was senior to me. That was one thought in my head that I was sort of coming up against someone who was more powerful really if you like in the hierarchy. I don't know how you would put that.

CK: Yes. In actual fact this decision has to be not how to handle a disciplinary procedure but the actual decision which was to decide to speak the truth.

A: Yes – whether to apportion blame on her or at a higher level, really.

CK: Well, the decision was to blame her manager wasn't it?

A: Yes.

(typing)

CK: So here, the thought was the manager was more powerful.

A: Yes. When I did try and speak to him about it previously well I actually sent him a formal memo because I was I felt I needed to put it in writing to him and he actually didn't reply but he spoke to me at a social event outside the ladies' toilet and told me not to send him memos how he didn't want memos from the likes of me and this sort of thing. And I didn't even know him. I didn't know who he was and it was a bit sort of outputting. He was sort of trying to say "back off" and I felt a bit sort of uncomfortable about that.

CK: So you felt a bit threatened, yes?

A: Well, I just thought it was inappropriate. I thought he was using his position a bit really which I think he was saying "I'm the head of service and you're just a pleb" kind of thing. "Don't send me memos, don't get in my face" and I said to him that if I had to do the same thing again I would do it because I thought he needed to know what was going on.

CK: (with typing) So manager had instructed not to send . . .

A: I think also on that one "manager more powerful" also you probably know from your contact with local government that there are managers around who some are very well thought of in the sense of being sort of groomed for something higher and he's one of the very politically favoured very . . . I mean he's just been given extra responsibilities and that sort of thing so he's quite politically favoured. I mean he's as powerful as anyone else at his level but he's also quite high profile. So you do think about these sort of things. If I say anything bad about him will that be accepted because he has got this quite high profile. He has always worked in the organisation so he's well known. He's gone up all the way through and this sort of thing. Then the thing that made me decide that I should say that I thought it was down to the . . . it wasn't just down to the particular individual. I felt it was wrong that someone at her level should take all the blame for that situation so I don't know how you'd say that. And that I felt they were trying to stitch her

up basically. Something had gone wrong and this is one of a number of things that has gone wrong and we're blaming it all on this one person and we'll get rid of them and that'll be it, type of thing, and I didn't really want to see her being scapegoated or whatever the expression is.

CK: And that's when she wasn't partly to blame because it was her that you initially had the problem with but it was her job to do something about it. You don't know that she hadn't actually and that she was stopped from doing anything?

A: Well, yes – well when I really pushed her about it she said "I've been told not to but I can't tell you who told me". But you just don't know whether that's correct or not. She was maintaining that it wasn't her who had made the decision not to release the information which is another reason why I wrote to him to try and say "look, I've got this problem" and I thought if he isn't withholding it he'll make sure I get the information which will sort the problem out. I thought it was one way to find out, so it did seem to tie in with what she said to some extent but it's one of those situations where you don't really know what's going on.

CK: There was something around all that information being withheld, wasn't there?

A: I suppose I felt people had been put at risk by the information being withheld and that's why it's important to say something.

(Typing)

Yes. I was a bit concerned about, um, how it might impact on the people in the team because it was like a team of people like myself – a team of people on our side – and I thought it might damage the relationship and in fact it wasn't very good to start with because as I say she in particular is quite a difficult person to deal with and her manager can be quite awkward as well so our relationship wasn't very strong but I would say it's got worse. So I was a

bit concerned about that. Not concerned enough not to do what I eventually did in the end.

CK: (typing) Concerned about the quality of the relationship with a parallel team, is that all right?

A: Yes – and then I thought that the other thing was that there were other people left from my side to talk . . . because the person who actually conducted the disciplinary interview was the manager and I actually rang the personnel person and asked for someone else to do it because I would have felt more comfortable talking freely if he didn't do the interview. She said "is that because you feel he is partially responsible?" and I said "well, I'd rather not say but I would just be more comfortable particularly after the incident I referred to where I felt a bit

CK: Threatened?

A: Yes, I don't think that's the right word, I just didn't feel his behaviour was very appropriate really. I didn't think it was then appropriate for him to interview me about the situation but she said he's got to do it because he's done all the others. My initial response was to try and get some neutral person there say the director who's above him to do it so that I could speak freely about both people but because he was actually going to be doing the interview that left me with the straight choice "do I almost confront him and say I actually think it's your fault. He was asking me the questions and I had to sort of put my money where my mouth was type of thing. I think that could inhibit somebody – it's more difficult to say when someone's actually there and they're the ones who are asking the questions. What else?

CK: I'm just putting in something about the career.

A: Yes, because there was him doing the interview and there was a personnel officer there. And I thought this is going to make me sound awful saying this. I was quite, to be honest with you, it was a situation I found quite

frustrating really. I got quite upset about it and I didn't want it to come across that I was being unreasonable. I didn't want the personnel officer to think that. It ties in with getting a reputation of someone being awkward or something like that.

CK: What about "appearing unreasonable".

A: Yes. And also that I felt that I had support from my own managers.

CK: Did you – from your own team?

A: Yes.

CK: They knew what was going on, did they?

A: They knew what was going on. They were quite supportive. In fact Ian actually had to go and do something similar and he had had similar experiences with both the individuals concerned and I knew that though he had asked us not to discuss it I knew he was pretty much saying something on the same lines to counter that that if another person said something similar and his manager who was head of service was comparable to this manager was again interviewed and I felt he would again say something similar so at least on our own we were fairly consistent by different degrees but I think there was an element of consistency.

CK: By manager and team, yes?

A: Yes. My other two colleagues didn't actually have to go and give evidence because it was me who had the most contact with this girl. They were quite supportive and sort of . . . they were aware and they were quite supportive. Just trying to think if there's anything else. There's quite a lot there . . .

CK: Um – go on . . .

A: I was quite concerned about the implications for the girl concerned really. I felt she could lose her job and I was weighing up in my mind "is what she's done bad enough for me to say, you know, so much that she's going to lose her job?" I mean, I didn't like her and I didn't particularly like the way she did her job but I didn't think as though she should lose her job.

CK: What about "worried about effect of evidence on employee's job future"?

A: Yes. I mean you don't really like to feel that you are responsible for . . . I mean you could say that she's responsible for herself in what she did but you have to weigh that up.

(Pause for thought)

I think that's most things. Drying up now . . .

CK: No, it's all right. Others might come so it's not a question of "this is it". What we'll do is we will now think about how strong those thoughts were in relation to the actual decision OK?

A: Yes

CK: And we'll take them randomly I think. So "worried about appearing unreasonable" was really something against blaming the manager. It was an influence not to do anything.

A: To do nothing really, to say oh, well, it's not my problem.

CK: So what we've got here is we've got lines and it's either a weak influence which is 1, a medium influence or a strong influence.

A: Weak, I would say, weak . . . I don't think I particularly. I do think what people say but I don't think it would have got me doing what I thought was right or the appropriate thing.

CK: So this was something that was really quite strong.

A: Yes

CK: So you would say that one was very strong?

A: Yes

CK: That's where you got your support from really wasn't it?

A: I think you need that

CK: Yes

A: Because that outweighs that. That makes that a weak influence because you would feel more unsure of yourself if you were in the wilderness wouldn't you?

CK: Yes, that's right. "Worried about the effect of the evidence on the employee's job future"?

A: Medium, I would say, against it. Because I mean, like I say, you go to the balance that I could end up contributing to her getting the sack and then the other side comes in to it as well "yes, if she gets the sack it's because she deserves it. In local government to get the sack you've got to do something fairly bad so I didn't think it would be just what I said or whatever so it was the pros and cons of that.

CK: What about this one here? "Manager high profile" - that was one against saying something wasn't it? Medium or strong?

A: Medium – I felt more worried about that initially. Before the interview I felt quite worried about that. That's why I asked for someone else to do it. But when I actually got there I thought right I am going to have to see how it goes and I actually didn't really decide until I got in there. My initial actually what I was going to do was to go in and just answer the questions with as minimal answers as I could get away with and then I thought "no, I am going to have to say actually" because he was asking me things like "who do you think is to blame for the situation?" and you can't say "nobody". I'm going to have to decide so I didn't really decide until I got there. So, it's a sort of fading influence, medium probably. It started off strong and then became not important once I got there and decided what to do. If that makes sense.

CK: Yes: "Concerned about quality of relationship with parallel team"?

A: Weak because it wasn't very good anyway, to be honest. But then I suppose you don't want to be seen to be making it worse.

CK: No

A: I felt that it needed to improve and that this wasn't going to help.

CK: This one:

A: This one's quite strong because the question's actually asked "you're just upset because we didn't give you stuff when you asked for it – you were just having a bit of a paddy because you asked for something that wasn't immediately supplied". I said "no, it's not that, my job's to make sure that people aren't at risk and I couldn't do that and I thought I think that's wrong and that's why I am upset.

CK: At the same time, I think that's a concept that should be on the map, about not being given the information.

A: Yes, I suppose so, because it's sort of frustrating and also.

CK: "Not given important information in the past", yes?

A: Yes, there's been a bit of history of sort of information not being shared, I suppose.

CK: So that was a reason for doing it, a reason for blaming the manager?

A: Yes, I suppose so. Yes, I mean.

CK: I don't want to twist it.

A: I'd probably more be blaming her for that because she was the person I had regular contact with. I thought he was mainly to blame in this one situation I had raised with him as a particular problem and he had not only not sorted it out but he had told me to b***** off, you know what I mean? This one time, I'd ploughed on with her and eventually got what I needed but this was the one thing where I felt because of this aspect this was more significant to me because the implications were much more serious.

CK: So that's really a free floating thing that's around in your head but it's not an influence either way on that particular thing?

A: I don't think in terms of blaming him, no.

CK: So "manager had instructed not to send memos"? Was that something that was deterring you from blaming him?

A: No, I was angry about the way he'd done it.

CK: So how strong an influence was it?

A: Medium – which probably shouldn't be an influence at all.

CK: Why not?

A: Because you shouldn't allow your own personal emotion to come into it. I felt that the way he'd dealt with me over it . . . The other thing I suppose I was angry about was when I went into this interview he pretended he'd never met me before. He said "I don't know you, I don't really deal with people at your level". And I said "we have met, we met at . . . . " and he was really saying "you're nothing to me" and he did know who I was he knew very well because the personnel woman had just told him that I didn't want to have him for the interview and why which I'd asked her not to do and as I walked in she was saying to him "she doesn't want you to do the interview" and I went "oh, no" it was just horrendous. He said "I don't understand this, I don't even know you, I don't even deal with people at your level" and I thought "oh, blimey", you know and so it was all really awkward. It became really wrong in the interview I felt because I felt that by asking him not to do the interview it looked like I was being unreasonable. I was just trying to be more objective about it. It was quite difficult really.

CK: What about "career prospects"? That was a reason for not blaming the manager.

A: Yes – weak because he worked in a different sort of area to me so it was unlikely . . . well, you can never say. As I say, he could become, it is likely he would be our next director. So, that could significantly, I mean, it would because he is not at all happy with me so I am sure it would damage my prospects with the current employer.

CK: "Manager more powerful" – that's against, really.

A: Moderate – I mean you probably know yourself local government is very hierarchical and it's very you know this and that level don't really mix.

CK: I forget sometimes because I work at all different levels.

A: Yes, I mean a lot of the work that I do I go out to industry and I deal with managing directors and I deal with people on building sites, all different types of people. To me that's a ridiculous way to operate but within the internal system it's very.

CK: I thought it was supposed to be breaking down.

A: Supposed to be, yes, they've got a flat structure but it's still very structured.

CK: "Employee being scapegoated"?

A: Yes – that was quite strong

CK: To blame him?

A: Yes, because I didn't feel that was the true picture. I felt that he was partially to blame if not. . . She said someone had told her not to give me the information but whether she was just saying that to get herself out of trouble or whether there was truth in it I don't know.

CK: So how strong an influence would you reckon that was?

A: Strong – 3.

CK: So you were being quite protective of her?

A: Yes, and if you'd said to me the year before of any of that, I would have said "no, I wouldn't". I don't actually like her as a person but having said that just because you don't like somebody doesn't mean you should turn a blind eye, you know. I had the opportunity to really shaft her, I suppose, but I didn't think it was the right thing to do because she had got . . .

CK: Can I put something in there about "don't like employee".

A: Yes – as I say she is unlikeable and very aggressive, very aggressive.

CK: So that was really . . .

A: That sort of linked her . . .

CK: Where are we going to put that?

A: Linked to employee being scape-goated because they are blaming her but she is a pain in the a***. I've been in a lot of meetings with her where she really intimidated people. Grown men were cowering, you know. She's quite a fearsome lady.

CK: Is that a weak arrow across there?

A: Yes, I think so. If I hadn't been presented with the situation I would probably have said "no, I wouldn't" but there's more to this particular situation than just personalities isn't there?

CK: That arrow goes the other way there. That arrow is saying blame manager but this one goes the other way, yes?

A: Yes – you don't blame the manager you blame her. And I suppose there was the fact that I thought that she was partially to blame. And like I say if she had done her job properly in the first place the whole thing would never have happened. So that's a separate box. That would go against the blaming the manager, I suppose.

CK: How strong?

A: That's moderate, I think.

CK: I've got one here that's not tied up to anything. "Manager high profile"? One going from there to there presumably, how strong is it?

A: That was probably more significant than how he was actually treating me at the moment because his position at the moment doesn't really have any impact on me apart from the fact that I know that there's a chance that other directors are coming up for retirement and he's being groomed for that position and that would then significantly impact on me and the work that I do.

CK: Do you want to make that one bigger or that one smaller?

A: That one smaller I think. That's the key thing is that not only does he have the profile but he's sort of well regarded. It's more difficult to speak out against somebody who is well regarded.

CK: How are we looking?

A: OK - Can I just put one about how I felt angry or frustrated about it. Frustrated, I think. So although I was trying to be objective there were personal emotions coming into it as well which perhaps shouldn't have but they did.

CK: No, that's all right.

A: It actually went on quite a long time, the initial phase of trying, constantly ringing up and saying "look, I need information, you did promise me".

CK: So is that a reason for blaming the manager "feeling frustrated"?

A: Um, probably yes, because when I wrote to him, sent the memo to him, I had got to the point when I felt I could do no more, I was banging my head against a brick wall. What happened was it all sort of came to a head and I said "look, I really need the information, it's putting people at risk" and she

said "no, I'm not giving it to you" and I said you have to legally give it to me and the solicitor says you have to give it to me because it's a legal thing and she just stormed out and it just came to a big head and still nothing happened so I thought I've got nowhere else to go with it now, I've tried talking to her, I've tried asking her nicely, I've tried getting a bit more confrontational, I've tried every sort of way around it I could and I reached the peak of frustration and I felt he sort of let me down really because it is a bit unprecedented and it's back to these levels, me at my level writing to him at his level. That was his point "you shouldn't be writing to me, you should sort it out with the person". But then, a few months on, he admits himself that there was a problem with this person so it's a difficult one, isn't it? Yes, I would say it was a weak one. Does that make sense?

CK: Yes. (Pause) Good this thing, isn't it?

A: But does it come out with the right decision at the end?

CK: I don't know. It doesn't matter about the right decision. It's your decision.

A: I mean in terms of the strengths.

CK: I don't know. Since this is a qualitative study, I am trying not to get into adding and subtracting. There are an awful lot of strong forces – one, two, three.

A: I think that's what it is. The strongest thing – there's probably more things going out but the strongest influences are the ones going in, aren't they?

CK: Yes – so do you think we're OK to date, so far?

A: Yes, that's about it I think.

CK: What I'd like to do now, if you can spare a bit more time, is to think about where these messages were coming from. The actual concepts. I am trying not to lead you but what I am trying to look at is – if you could think of something on your shoulder saying those things, how would you classify it?

A: Like where's it coming from?

CK: Yes

A: Do you want me to do each one?

CK: Yes but I need to just look at. I can code it but I need to know what the codes are.

A: I see what you mean. Well, there's my own sort of personal values, what I think are right and wrong.

CK: OK so let's identify those first.

A: Number 3 I think that's something that I've . . . that was from within myself I think.

CK: The fourth one – that's you.

(Pause)

A: That's my own value system saying she was partially to blame.

CK: And that was personal? Don't like employee?

A: Yes.

CK: It doesn't matter. What about that?

A: Frustrated, that was, yes.

CK: What about "career prospects"?

A: I think that's like an organisation. Frustrated like a feeling was definitely personal values. Like a lot of these things where I said he's high profile that comes down to a perception that I have but it's inherent within the organisation really that certain people have more power than others and that you should only deal with people either on your own level or slightly higher perhaps.

CK: Yes, so where would you say the organisational ones were?

A: Those few there – "manager high profile", "manager more powerful". Those are things that I have observed within the organisation, I suppose.

CK: OK.

A: That's the same kind of thing, that there's a sort of feeling that if that person is powerful and important and you accept them it's all linked with your perception of how the organisation works really.

CK: "People at risk"?

A: That is a personal thing but it's also to do with my training and background and the nature of the job I have, being professional. It's a separate one from your personal value.

CK: It's a professional value.

A: That's me saying I don't think this is right from a professional point of view not a moral point of view. That was a technical decision.

CK: So that's a third source, OK.

A: I don't know about that one "manager had instructed not to send memos". I suppose that's again me. That's a personal thing in that I'd been told not to. I felt sort of upset about that, that he wasn't taking it seriously, and then coupled with the fact that he pretended he'd never met me. Things like that. I mean you could say he'd genuinely forgotten but . . .

CK: Do you think that's personal?

A: Yes, I think that's more personal than anything else. "Manager involved in carrying out interview" – that's a sort of practical thing that I felt I couldn't speak freely.

CK: Is that organisational?

A: Yes, could be organisational because I did ask if somebody else could come but they said it had got to be him. Then there's like team things. I knew the team believed it wasn't right.

CK: Peer pressure?

A: Yes. And number seven as well.

CK: Worried about appearing unreasonable?

A: Well, it's sort of like a society thing. It's like society doesn't like people who say "it's his fault". It is much more comfortable and easy to just go along and not really blame anybody and say I don't really know what happened. It would have been a lot easier. It would have been less stressful.

(Inaudible)

A: This is personal same as scape-goating. My personal value whatever. That's professional.

(Pause: obviously working on the software)

CK: Do you think that sort of actually summarises it?

A: Um, I think so, yeah. You never actually realise it when you're involved in it. No wonder you get a headache when you've got all these things milling about.

CK: It's actually quite useful to see it all written down.

A: It's quite a good way of representing it, I think, especially with the different arrows because it does clearly show where the strongest difference made me do that because it doesn't feel very logical on the surface of it because there are more reasons not to but when you look at the strengths I can see now because it was more instinctive really. I thought, I know this isn't right, I've got to say this, you know what I mean?

CK: Yes

A: Even though I knew it was a bit suicidal really! (Laugh)

CK: Not necessarily. Not necessarily, someone might have valued it.

A: Well I wasn't the only person who said it but that doesn't mean that he liked me. Nobody likes to hear themselves being blamed for it even if it is right, do they?

CK: No.

A: Especially when they are presenting this front of "we're very concerned about this, we want to get to the bottom of it, we want to find out what is going on". He knew very well what was going on because he'd been told about it. And it does sort of rankle when you think "hold on a minute". Those strong influences won over at the end of the day. Perhaps if I had done

a little map I would have said there's more arrows coming out perhaps I won't say anything!

(Offered a print out of the map to be posted to her and she agreed.)

A: Interesting that I haven't put anywhere here about concerns about effect on manager. I have put concern about impact on career but not on the manager – I wasn't really. It never even occurred to me. I think I assumed it wouldn't actually have any impact on him. I only thought about the impact on me and her. I didn't actually stop and think. It wasn't because I didn't care or anything, I just didn't think about it. And doing that, I never thought it could have had bad consequences for him and his career. Because I don't actually think it has made any difference at all so perhaps I sort of knew that instinctively. It never occurred to me to think what if the personnel women says to the chief executive "he's terrible" it never occurred to me. Interesting – I don't know why not.

CK: Were you more concerned about telling the truth or were you more concerned about the consequences of what you did?

A: Beforehand I was more concerned about the consequences and then when I was in there I was more concerned about telling the truth, really.

CK: Right - why do you think it changed?

A: I'm not sure – I think when you're confronted with questions like "well, who do you think was to blame?" you know "what exactly did happen", yeah, quite closed questions, you do have to say you know whatever the consequences you do have to give an answer, you can't say "I don't want to answer" well, I could have said I don't want to answer but then that's back to not wanting to appear unreasonable isn't it. To appear unreasonable if you do and you appear unreasonable if you don't - it's a bit of a "no-win" situation and then you think about refusing to do the interview in the first place – you can be required to do it so that's appearing unreasonable again isn't it?

(Ending remarks around relationships around her, being accused of causing stress, etc).

Appendix C

Informants' narratives

Angela

OK the thing I thought about to talk about was quite a complex situation so I thought I'd better try and explain it. It involves – part of my job involves dealing with land that is contaminated and in particular landfill sites which you might have read about there's been quite a lot of publicity about landfill gas that can sometimes migrate off these sites and in looking at one particular site I became a bit concerned about the possibility of there being very high levels of gas on this one particular site in our area and I discovered that another person working for the council had known about this situation for a considerable period of time. She does a similar type of job to me – in a lot of respects we're very different but in this sense our roles are quite similar but she hadn't let me know and when I wanted to try and find information out to try and find out exactly what was going on she refused to give me the information. There was reports and so on that had been produced that she had got copies of but wouldn't let me have them and I tried for weeks to get hold of information getting more and more concerned. It finally turned out that in fact the gas was actually very high and actually migrating off the site towards some houses so through not letting me having the information she was potentially, I felt, putting those people at risk because we should have really known about it to make sure that nobody's property was affected and not at risk. The situation sort of went on from there and I eventually felt that I had to raise it with her manager well in fact two managers above her in fact – I went right up to the head of service in the end. And had no joy with him either and sort of became quite frustrated and ended up quite a lot of subterfuge writing notes on my computer and confidential file notes for myself so that I had a record of what was going on because I was getting more and more concerned about it and then the next thing I heard was that she'd been – that this particular officer had been suspended and they asked me to go along and, well they didn't tell me she had been suspended they said

they wanted me to go and have a chat with her manager and the personnel officer and it subsequently turned out that they were looking to take disciplinary action against her and they wanted me to, I don't know how to express it really, to use this example as one piece of evidence against her and the person conducting the interview was this particular manager who I'd also had a bit of a problem actually getting through to as well so I was then faced with a decision do I tell the whole truth and really drop her in it or do I blame the manager or you know it was a real dilemma because you don't know what sort of stance to take because I felt she was really wrong in what she'd done and I felt he was wrong because he didn't do anything to sort the problem out and it was do you drop her in it? Do you drop him in it and jeopardise your own position because he's in a much more senior position than I am and potentially could do my career damage or whatever. I felt that was quite an ethical dilemma, well the whole situation was how to deal with it.

Bob

The story is I've been working with S now for seven years. Approximately three years ago I was given the position I'm in now – process manager. Obviously there was a salary increase and also there was a company car involved. Initially what we have to do is we pay for our fuel by Dialcard basically so every time we refuel the car we use the Dialcard and then we log personally our business miles. Our business miles are paid for obviously through the company – private miles you fund yourself and we put in an expense claim for logging on these miles every month, well, every month normally and we pay for the private miles by cheque. Now, it's fine and it's quite clear and obvious what we're supposed to do. What happened was I went with another guy in his car, in his company car we went to Swindon, on a site visit if you want and the subject was company cars and mileage etc and it transpires that it's quite common practice to, well, what's the word, invent, I suppose, business miles and then obviously it reduces the amount of petrol you're consuming whereas if you're not actually doing the business miles it's actually private mileage. So for instance I could say I'm going to Swindon

today – sorry I could put on my expense form I had been to Swindon today, that would be about 191 miles which would then obviously give you 191 miles worth of fuel free so I was a bit – at the first I thought it was just - perhaps it was just him but as time has gone along it's now, it's not uncommon for it to happen if you want. It's the accepted norm now not to be too outrageous and because S are in the UK its expenses are coming to something like £1 million a year it gets lost in the scheme of things and it's not traceable, really and no-one ever questions it. The general manager, my direct manager, just signs the authorisation and that's it really. So that's basically the story in essence.

CK: So are you doing the same thing?

B: Yes

Colin

In fact it's something that actually happened, it's occurred. The situation is at work. I'm the regional manager for a company that operates all over the world. My region is the north of England. Part of the business that I'm involved with is a new business venture working through a major distribution company supported by international steel producing mills. Our venture is a distribution of smaller volumes into different customers through major contracts – people like "A", power stations, those sort of people. So the ultimate customer is some of the major national and international businesses and we're trading with people like fabricators, contractors at a lower level who are actually doing the installation work. The situation that we have is a site we operate from in the northwest is in Northwich and the company in Northwich who we have leased the site from or part of the site from is a company called "B" who are a fabricator. They are a fabricator and operate for "A" and they have managed to achieve the contract for the total fabrication for "A" in the northwest of England. We are a supplier to "A" on a contract. We supply to "B". We took on board the site before I started with my company originally took on board the site to "A"'s recommendation that we should go on board totally with "B" so obviously there are good strong

links between "A" and "B" which we knew which we did so "B"'s pension fund are actually our landlords so a very close relationship. "B" overnight went bust and reformed as "B" Ltd owing lots of people lots of money as in these circumstances actually wrote off all the debts and started up again. Not a very pleasant thing to do but it happens unfortunately all over the place and all the time. The situation I was in was that the company I was working for, that I work for, stood to lose a considerable amount of money and quite legally we had insurance cover which would pay us some of the money back, insurance premiums would be increased and we would recover some of the money but we were expected by "B" to carry on and trade with them. We spoke to "A" about it and "A", although very uncomfortable at a certain level about the situation, were told that we had to go on trading with them – that they had the contract. But word came to us through "A" that "B" had been told to look after the major suppliers so I went back to "B" to find out what "looking after" meant and they had been told to make payments to the suppliers.

CK: Did that include yourselves?

C: Including us. But not many suppliers – handpicked – those suppliers who were needed, to compensate them for the losses they'd incurred with the bad debt. So my dilemma was simple really – the company's interests on the one side were obviously important to me. I knew the company was covered by insurance I also know the way insurance works that over a period of time the insurance company will recover whatever it paid out by increased premiums or whatever, percentage reduction etc. So I realised I must fight for the company. On the other side, these payments were illegal. This company that was paying us this money, we had no rights to anything. They had no legal right to pay it to us and we are actually being paid for no service by the new company on the basis that the old company took us for a bad debt. To make matters worse, we would be one of the chosen two or three

CK: Out of perhaps 20 creditors

C: Out of perhaps probably a lot more and an awful lot of money. On the other side of it our managing director who is Italian (our immediate line company is an Italian company) saw it as an excellent opportunity not only to collect the money from the insurance that would be paid out but to screw the "B" for as much as we could out of them and make ourselves a nice profit. So my job was to go and negotiate the deal with "B".

CK: What happened? What's the decision?

C: Well the decision was would I be prepared to go and do it knowing the facts and what I came to the usual conclusion I went back to my own company and discussed it with several people about the situation all of whom felt (other than in fact the managing director) a little bit uncomfortable with this. "Oh, I've got to admit this is . . ." "Ooh", "ooh" are we er? Ooh "We don't want to be transmitting e-mails about this, we don't want to be presenting memos about this, what are you going to be doing? So, well, you know, it's up to you, boys, we go in and take your pick. The managing director was quite adamant "This is a wonderful opportunity to make some money and I'd be a great shining light if I went off and did it for him". And then when I got to see – my thought process went through "this isn't the right thing to do". I'd been in the situation before but whereby we weren't going to get paid so my dislike for what the "B" company had done was historical. I'd seen the situation in the past. I spoke to "B" and their attitude I found appalling. They'd planned this for some time. They'd worked out that if you paid corporation tax you won't lose as much because you'll be able to claim back your corporation tax and all this sort of thing and really they were being so bloody-minded about the whole thing that I was appalled. In fact I was more appalled by their approach to it than I was by the approach of my own company so in fact really their attitude to it confirmed what I was going to do and I went out and screwed "B" for every penny I could get out of them which everybody at my company thought was unbelievable – they couldn't believe I got so much money out of them but it was just simply their attitude and the way they thought everything through to this point and tried to work out cover all the bases and all the angles to minimise their losses. I think

what really appalled me most of all was in one of the meetings I had with the chap I was negotiating with a personnel manager but obviously was feeding information back and forwards to their directors. He had to go back when we came to any agreement and his view was "well, there's lots more business to be had from "B" and we've got a much stronger balance sheet now". Well, they would have because everyone else has just financed it! So really the dilemma was the decision whether I'd go and do this but the attitude of the company that had instigated the whole situation really was well hang on there's no one got any morals or ethics in this lot and this lot the "B" lot are the worst of a bad bunch.

Don

It is related to the situation of the organisation I'm working in which has performed catastrophically in the last two or three years. There's no other words to describe it. It's a supposed educational institution that got involved in all kinds of unsustainable commercial activity and it got to the point where as a college of further education there were something like close on 1000 staff. We had 250 managers and we had less than 80 lecturers so that gives some indication I think of how much education was taking place and how much activity which you could hardly describe – by no measure of description could it be called education. That led to absolutely catastrophic financial performance and it led to variously, the college having to make hundreds of people redundant to get down to what was a sustainable staff group and change the structure of the staff group as well so that it became an educational institution again and that's what we've been doing for, I would say, the last six months to nine months. That meant people being er leaving on a voluntary – it's all been done through voluntary redundancy, through generous packages. But the whole structure has actually changed as well and that meant er almost everybody has or will have to apply for jobs in the new structure. Now it started at the top and worked its way down and some people left voluntarily and some people were persuaded to leave. What you were left with were a number of management posts – you have the senior

level and the next level down and I was in the next level down so I am the - I'm either a senior manager or a middle manager, depending on which terminology you use. Under me there are a number of other managers and other staff and each were allocated a particular grading for the post. Now in an agreement with the trade unions one thing that was forbidden under the agreement with the trade unions that anybody should benefit from this restructuring – that no-one could get promotion out of it as people were losing jobs no-one could get promotion so that curtailed the possibility of appointing the best people to the job because it couldn't be done on merit. It could be done on merit within a band but you had to be in a band to apply within the same band or you could apply lower down than the band you were presently in. Now – I'm getting to it now . . .

I had a number of posts that I had to appoint people into at a particular level. Now one was manager of what we called student support services which covers student advice and information, receptionists, telephonists. It includes counselling, student counselling, managing the hardship and access funds, careers advice. Everything you could call welfare, information, guidance and so on so one of those posts was to manage that that would work under me as manager. The person who had been doing the job for a year or two – very very skilled, very good, because of a quirk in the way that she'd been appointed two years ago had been appointed at a level which was too low for her to apply for the job. If the job was at, say, a level four, she was actually at a level two so couldn't apply for her job at a level four which was basically her job except it wasn't because no-one could claim any job was theirs but it covered everything she'd been doing. So that seemed to me to be a somewhat in breach of natural justice but it was with the agreement with the trade unions that people cannot benefit from the restructure. However there were other people in my view less suited who could apply for that job in fact there were people clearly less suited who could apply for that job and one or two of them set out in particular. Now all the staff in that area, not collectively but one by one, managed to get my ear and they all said "if any of the people applying for it get it there will be a mass protest because we want the person who has been managing us for the last two years". Now I'm

not the sort of person to be intimidated by that but I mean it did confirm my own view that that was the person for the job. So what did I do? The post was graded to – I'll call it four – and that was the grade that was merited so the person deserved a four but the person who was doing the job couldn't have it. So what could I do? Well I manipulated the situation in such a way that I got the post downgraded to a two which allowed a particular person who'd been doing it to apply, which she did, and she got the job. But in so doing what I effectively did was make sure that other people didn't get the job. In other words I intervened in the system, I got things changed and consciously discriminated against some people in favour of other people in the spirit of what I thought was natural justice – against the spirit of what the agreement was with the trade unions and the consequence of that decision was I think I got the best person for the job. The people who could have applied who were effectively debarred from applying by changing the category of the job subsequently left the organisation and took redundancy because there wasn't a place for them in the new organisation. So the dilemma really I suppose was concerned with what is fair and what is just and there was no easy answer to that question.

Edith

E: It is difficult to phrase it or put it into words if you don't know how the NHS is structured so I'll work on the assumption that you don't know anything about the NHS as an organisation.

CK: Well I know about health authorities and trusts, health trusts and the various sorts of other trusts. I participate in the collaborative process in Shropshire.

E: My previous employer, I worked for a community trust and it was just before it became a trust and I actually, when I was on maternity leave with my eldest child, while I was away I was rung and told that there was going to be a merger between the community trust the organisation that I worked for and the FHSA (before FHSAs were part of health authorities). It was going

to be a pioneering scheme within the country because nowhere else was it being done. It was all they talked about FHSAs joining with the health authority and it was quite an innovative thing to do. I think what became clear to me... I worked very peculiarly after the birth of my child for lots of different reasons which I think are all linked with why I did what I did but I worked in a very peculiar way because I didn't have a proper maternity leave because the organisation hadn't covered my post and therefore I was going in and doing my job with my baby – it was an awful time. Anyway, my post was extremely, was a senior post and because of this merged organisation, because it was a finance post, it was the only post that was actually advertised – everybody else was kind of slotted in. The chief executive that I worked with went off and was found a job in the health authority. The chief executive of the FHSA moved over and became chief executive of the new organisation and what quickly became clear I think is that the motivation for the merger was not necessarily in terms of providing benefits in terms of health care but was probably around increasing certain persons' salary. I applied for the job in the new organisation and I got it. I had a very difficult time I think because merging two organisations is not a very pleasant thing to be doing, particularly when you've got a big chunk of it that actually doesn't want to do it and unfortunately one of the big chunks in FHSA is admin. The big chunks are admin and finance and I was left with a rather large chunk that really didn't want to be part of the whole thing. After about, I don't know it was about 18 months, two years, of sort of working in this environment, the chief executive announced that he was going to be looking at different models that were going on elsewhere with a view to protecting his salary and seeing how the future of the organisation ought to look like. He announced this to the senior management team and there was quite a lot of disquiet – the fact that he was brazen enough to say "I've had an extra £5,000 out of it and of course I don't want to lose it". He then went on a fact-finding mission to try and find out what was going on elsewhere and then came back and said that he thought that the best thing to do was to split the FHSA between the purchaser and the provider role in the same way that the rest of the NHS was being split and that he was going to take away part of the FHSA and go into the health authority and leave part of the FHSA behind within the health care

trust and therefore this was going to happen within the next week or so and they were going to advertise for a new chief executive for the new primary health care trust which would retain a lot of the innovative practice which was seen as being of benefit originally. So they advertised and they got someone else who was going to come along and then, while we were waiting for her to come, we had a few meetings with her the senior managers talking about what she wanted us to be doing and what she saw as the direction in which she was going to manage it and she was brilliant after the one that we had had who hadn't really been up to scratch she was absolutely superb. And then I heard a whisper – my office is we had two houses next to each other – the one house has the chief executive in, human resources and other bits and pieces and then the next house is all my staff, finance, and I'd picked up a whisper when I was in the chief executive's house about a report that was being written and I found out I saw something about it and it looked as though it was potentially quite explosive to me. So I went in at the weekend because I knew the codes to everywhere and I went in at the weekend. At that time there was no security on the computers. If you knew how to operate a computer you could find what you wanted and I found it – I found the report that was going and it was going to the FHSA because the FHSA was still a legal entity and met on its own. I pulled off the report and effectively he was backing away from everything he had said he was going to do. He was going to pull out the entire FHSA and not leave anything behind and chuck everything into the health authority which was the complete reversal of what he'd said he was going to do. So I sat with it and I was looking at it and I thought I can't let this happen – we've got this new chief executive coming and it's a betrayal of everything that we've been working for over the last couple of years and he's not saying of this to anybody. So I thought about it – this was obviously on a Saturday – and I took it home with me, realising what I'd got, and on the Monday morning I went in – I went to a fax machine in another office because I wasn't sure how much was traceable and how much wasn't traceable! I went to a fax machine in another office and I rang up the prospective chief executive and told her what I'd got and that I would be faxing it over to her and that she was to stand by the machine. So I faxed the whole thing over to her and then proceeded to eat well destroy the copy

I'd got! And waited. As soon as she read it she realised that it was a complete reversal of what had been said to her and she then got in touch with the chief executive of the health authority and shared it with him. He was up in the air because he didn't know anything about it. He then – the political machinations were considerable. Our chief executive called us all together because he knew it had to be somebody senior well I think he guessed it because of the way it had gone through and basically said that he had cancelled all his appointments and was sitting in his office all day waiting for the guilty person to own up because whoever it was had betrayed him and it was a terrible thing to do. Needless to say I didn't go and confess and it went on for another week or so. Ultimately the prospective chief executive withdrew because she said "this isn't the post which I was actually applying for and appointed to – I wanted something far more exciting than what this actually is. So she withdrew so the health authority chief executive appointed the second person on the list who was an absolute disaster and the FHSA did withdraw in total and the relationship broke never to mend in many areas and the chief executive was awful and went through and absolutely decimated the organisation. So I was left feeling if I hadn't told then the chief executive, the prospective one who would have been very good, would have come and I know she wouldn't in hindsight because they only had a week's notice earlier of the FHSA meeting in a week or two and I'd sent it off in the hope that somebody could do something to stop what they were doing and that actually didn't happen.

Frederick

The taping of this interview failed – a blank tape. The following is therefore a summary from my notes of the initial explanation of the problem.

F works as a civil engineer on highways and he is consulted on planning applications and makes recommendations in the light of his professional assessment. In this instance, a complaint was received from a member of the public that a company on an industrial estate was running a business for

which there was no planning permission (a gym). He went out to investigate and talked to the applicant and noticed, on his way out, that the access to the property was not inappropriate and very difficult. He therefore recommended turning down the application. The applicant went to all the chief officers complaining, particularly because the planning department was recommending granting the application. When the application went to committee, the local ward member had received a complaint so the committee decided to carry out a site visit. On the basis of the site visit, the committee decided to turn down the application. The applicant went to a lot of expense, employing a planning consultant and appealed. The appeal was dismissed.

Gaynor

In 1992 I moved down to A from, well immediately prior to that I was in Stretford, to work as Service Manager Mental Health Developments and everything was fine, moved back to my home county, that was no problem it was found somewhere to live, the job was great, the job was great, it seemed as if it didn't quite fit because A Social Services as it was then was in the process of developing community mental health teams and it was quite, it was almost embryonic really and the fact that I'd worked in different areas seemed to my line manager at the time a benefit. I'd worked in developments and policy areas so that seemed to be OK and for the first 18 months, everything was fine – we did quite a lot of developmental work and obviously with the Community Care Act and various other things lots of struggling because there weren't any guidance documents that I could go to because we were actually trying to work out what was going to happen within A with the budgets within A with the community mental health teams, Community Care Act and all the rest of it but, you know, it was very enjoyable.

Then my line manager for some reason took a dislike to me overnight and, even now, I can't complete what the problem was although I've got some vague ideas. One was we had some infrastructure money to develop

community mental health teams and she wanted to develop particular teams and I thought it was better to actually bolster the teams that were already in existence because they were already struggling particularly with the ? of social workers under the Mental Health Act. And although we didn't have this disagreement in public it seemed as if that had really upset her because up until then I was this person who had worked very very closely with her. When she was off on leave or sick I sort of took on her responsibilities and yet there was another two colleagues that were on the same level as me – one who had direct responsibility for community mental health teams in terms of management of individuals and another who had responsibility for care and residential services. At the same time I'd also got a place at Aston to do a MSc in Public Sector Management and I'm wondering whether that sort of upset the apple cart a bit because my manager was in her late 50's. She had a reputation for being extremely difficult to work with – she certainly didn't have any problems in putting people down in public and I'd seen it and cringed. Almost to the point of seeing our training officer come out of her office in tears, most unfortunate. Anyway, I started with the Masters and I was told that my workload would not be reduced that I would have to continue to do five days work plus the Masters. My funding was from CCETSW the social work training board so the local authority had no issues and difficulties there so I carried on. I worked Saturdays to keep up with the workload because she, at that stage, she was becoming quite a bully. At the end of the following year, so the end of that first academic year that I was at Aston, previously in the February we had had one of our regular meetings which was for service managers and divisional manager and at that point in February I decided I had some exams in June and could I book leave which was minuted and I requested that and thought nothing of it. The atmosphere between my manager and myself got worse to the point in May when I put my leave card in she said "I'm on leave those two weeks in June" and I said "well, I'd already booked them in February" and she said "I'm the divisional manager – I'm on leave, you're not on leave, that's it" and I said "well, they're my exams, you know they're my exams" and she said "no" and she said . . . and I said "well, I want to go on leave". Anyway, we had not a heated debate because she terrified me I have to say she's the only person in

my life that has actually frightened me, bullied me, which perhaps we'll go into in a bit more detail in a minute. But she really did intimidate me so my view was, inside, well I'm taking that time off because they're my exams and I know I'm right. I tried to find the minutes of the meeting where this was agreed and they weren't available. In fact nobody had a copy – my other two colleagues at the same level also didn't have a copy. Anyway. . I said to her I was going on leave. She said to me that if I went off sick she'd discipline me and I said well that's your choice but they're my exams, and the commitment of the department, and all the rest of it. Anyway her son became quite poorly and she seemed as if she became slightly more relaxed so as my exams were approaching like in a week's time she said well take the week off because I'm going to need some time off in July and I want you to be here so it was almost a sort of backdown I guess so of course I did the exams and that was fine.

Things then continued to be particularly difficult for another year. She used to set me deadlines to do huge reports within 24 hours so I was working until 2.00 in the morning here and I'd go in and it would have to be right and then she'd obviously take the credit – fair enough, she's my manager – that's up to her. During that second academic year at Aston, I began to get quite distressed by this. I mean, I actually dreaded going into work, my stomach was in a knot, I started to feel anxious. I never knew what was going to happen. I had gone to my personnel officer to ask "is there any chance I could move to another division". He said it wasn't possible, that there were no similar jobs so my own choice was either to stay or leave the authority. I didn't actually go into any detail about the treatment I was receiving from my line manager because, I suppose this is where the dilemma comes in, I had a gut feeling that because my line manager was such a strong personality and quite frankly frightened most people if they were to admit it but they did allude to it. But my – sorry, I've lost my train of thought. The view was I either put up and shut up or got out.

I then in the March of 1997 applied for a post as a lecturer in organisational studies at Salford University and I had an interview and I told my manager. I

mean in retrospect I shouldn't have done but I told her that I was going to go for this interview and I took a day's leave. When I got back from Salford, my colleague who was responsible for community mental health teams rang me up and said "my manager's been making plans following your departure" so I said "well they didn't appoint at Salford so I'm still a member of staff" and he said "oh, well, she's been having a conversation with me about how really you're not fitting into the department and how it would be a lot easier to actually restructure the division if you weren't around. The fact that you're doing this course, you're trying to sort of bring into the workplace the stuff you've learnt on the course" and I said "yeah, I mean that's what it's about". Anyway, it all got very unpleasant and I was a little stunned as to why this guy was ringing me. The reason I'm avoiding names is because you'll know the names.

CK: yes, I'd guessed them anyway

G: I couldn't understand why this guy was phoning me and I didn't know if he was part of the sort of stooge network that the line manager had developed which she did because there were certain people that she had as close confidants, I guess, all men. Anyway, the next day I went into work and I had had two years now of being bullied and threatened and undermined and made to look small and I went in about 8.00 in the morning and she was there and I said "now look, I've had a conversation with B last night which quite disturbed me and I wondered if you could have a similar conversation with me. Well she absolutely hit the roof, everything on the desk went on the floor, it was "how dare I confront her, who did I think I was" and I said "look, I'm just trying to understand you know because for the last two years she'd made my life very difficult" and my heart was in my mouth and I was in a terrible state and you know basically I got the "how dare you come up with all this, I'm the manager, I'm the one in the position of power, you know, who do you think you are" and she said "I want to see you both at 8.00 tomorrow morning". So during the day I was in a terrible state thinking "what am I going to do, I've got a mortgage, I need the job, I don't want to just walk out" and she was almost engineering as if I was going to walk out.

Anyway, the following morning arrived and there was two chairs which I assumed was going to be for B and I on one side of the wall and one chair on the other side of the wall but B and the divisional manager sat together and I sat opposite and it was horrendous I was so or felt so humiliated because there were things like "just because" no, "I have no authority within a particular division" and I said "well on occasions when you're not here I delegate for you" "no, that's not true, no you don't" and I thought well this is most odd. She had said to me the previous morning that she saw a lot of her in me which I didn't quite understand at the time but what she said was that I'd gone into social services straight after I'd graduated and I'd qualified as a social worker and gone back in and things and what she had done was she'd done it twenty years later than I'd done it and although she said that she saw a lot of her in me which really insulted me I guess. I thought "blimey, I'm sure I don't behave like this", I think it was actually an attempt at a compliment. Anyway, going back to this morning when I was being humiliated, she was coming out with all this business I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time – I should be grateful to her for giving me an opportunity to fulfil my post and I should be grateful to her that I was able to do a Masters degree and that she'd supported me and all I'd done was thrown it back at her and I'd been ungrateful and I was actually applying for jobs. And I said "well, I told you, I needn't have told you, I could just have taken a day's leave and gone". Then she said that just demonstrated the fact that I was untrustworthy that the fact that I'd even thought of just going without telling her. At the end of the hour long conversation which really went along those lines she said you've got until tomorrow morning to make a decision and I thought well I don't know what decision she wants me to make because I'm certainly not going to leave because she wants me to. Anyway, I was extremely angry and very upset and I thought well I'm going to have to go to her boss I'm going to have to try to her boss about what's going on knowing really in my heart of hearts that this wouldn't actually get me anywhere. So I went to see C later that afternoon and I tried to explain what had been going on. He had obviously been primed by D because he said that it was all nonsense, that I was making it up that what the division didn't want and certainly what Social Services didn't want was someone who was actually going to cause trouble.

D had a reputation which was very strong, she had done a lot for mental health services and, really, I shouldn't be making derogatory remarks about her and just go back to your job pat on the head and go and get on with it. The following morning came again I saw her at 8.00 in the morning and it was almost as if she had had a personality change but not a real one. It was almost like a complete false . . . I went in and her words were "I think I was a little hard on you yesterday" and I was just dumbfounded after the treatment I had had the previous day and she said "clearly, this is not going to work out and you need to look for another job" and I said "yes, possibly so, but it would have to be one that I actually want, I'm not just going to go". She apologised for being unhelpful and rude and said let's just forget it and move on.

A couple of months later there was a job that came up at the Mental Health Trust as a Quality Assurance Manager and I decided I was actually going to go for that because it was in mental health. It wasn't anything I particularly wanted to do but I thought well I can at least get out of this horrible mess and I'd spoken to the director of mental health services over there and he said "yes, that's fine, that would be great yes, we'll give you some. . . this is the information that we're giving out to all applicants" and I went along to the interview and I got the job and I was a bit – driving into work to tell D that I was leaving was probably even harder than confronting her. I thought I was going to have a heart attack, my neck . . I thought clearly this is the right way to go about it because she's obviously causing so much anxiety and stress. Anyway I got the job and I handed my notice in and I had to give three months' notice which was torture, absolute torture. I mean all the things which she made me do in 24 hours I was now doing in 18. I was doing...everything that could possibly go wrong was my fault but then I thought . . my dilemma was "what do I do about this? Do I take out a grievance procedure against her or do I just ignore it and bide my time and go?" and I think that the issue about the grievance procedure had been there since the initial incident with the annual leave being blocked because although I didn't feel . . well I did feel that it was grounds for a grievance but I really felt at that time that this was silly that it would just ruin my career.

You don't take out grievances against line managers unless you want to leave and forget your career. So during those three months when I was actually giving my notice in it was torture. And I really thought I'd got rid of her in my psyche.

Anyway, some time later, there was a post that had come up in the Trust that was Director of Child and Family Services and I felt that I would apply for it. Now nobody knew I'd applied apart from my own manager in the Trust plus E who was the Director and close associate of D. I'd met a colleague from social services about two weeks before the interview for this post and apparently, according to him, D had made comments fairly publicly in front of a number of people that she knew I was applying for the post and she would do her damnedest to stop me getting it, that I had no right to be a Director of Child and Family because I'd only been a social worker for six months and that six months I'd worked in a children's home. Well I was saying to my colleague, K, "well, she knows that's not true, because she interviewed me, she saw my CV she knew the experience I'd had and she appointed me and if she felt I hadn't had the experience in the first place then why was she appointing me?" Needless to say I was advised by the Chief Executive of the Trust to withdraw my application. Now I can only base that on the assumption that D had done her damnedest to do things. So another dilemma was "what do I do with that? How do I deal with that sort of situation?" So even when she's no longer my manager she's still got or felt she had enough power to disrupt if not ruin my career. I talked through with my line manager at the Trust F and she said "well, whatever you want to do I'll support you" because she was Director of Human Resources and Quality and F's view was this was well out of order. But, knowing that A's so close, I felt again I didn't want to disrupt things. Because I'd moved down here from Manchester and because I'd then later bought the house, my family are from A, I didn't particularly want to start moving around again but I felt that I'd have to leave if I actually took this action any further. So again I just tried to deal with it.

Just before I started in Birmingham about a year ago, I worked for a couple of months for a voluntary organisation which in itself was a bit bizarre but anyway that's bye the bye. Anyway, it was for three months, actually, and I had a contract and I worked for G. Now, there were all sorts of issues there. One of the voluntary counsellors for G, his wife was investigating a circle of abuse that happened in A in the late '80's, and I said just in conversation I wasn't here I was up north and he said well you have worked with D and I said "yes" "well, she is part of the investigation" and I said "that's as maybe, but I can't help up because . . . " and he said that his wife was actually looking for people who had had experience of working with this woman because his wife, who was a solicitor leading the investigation, felt that there was something not quite right about D's responses to the questions involving the allegations. So this voluntary counsellor said that this woman that she actually wanted to speak with people who had worked with D and she was actually speaking with B and with other people who worked with her in the '90's. So she phoned me up and said could she talk with me and I said yes but I want to make it quite clear that I know nothing about that so she said to me what was she like as a person and I suppose in a way all the dilemmas I'd had about grievance, about taking issues further, about confronting her because I didn't have the courage and various other things, I felt that I'd now got an opportunity to tell somebody what an absolute evil woman she is and when I spoke with this woman I said to her I could give her ten names of people who I'd seen her publicly humiliate including a consultant psychiatrist, colleagues from the health authority, training officer I've mentioned, community mental health team managers who she had actually set out – all of them women, I might add, who she almost had set out to destroy and although we were on the phone for about an hour and I did keep reiterating the fact that I didn't know anything about what had happened, this was my impression of her as a manager, because a lot of the questions were about things like "would she cover things up? How would she react in certain situations?" and she gave me a number of scenarios and asked me how she would react and I responded to that and I just felt so much better but she still haunts me and although it's now been three, three and a half years since I worked with her I dread seeing her because the other dilemma is that

she actually gets on the train and I am on the way to Birmingham and sort of says "oh, hello H, can I sit next to you" I don't know how I would respond because I'd like to say to her "no, I don't want you to sit by me" and I'd actually really like to tell her what I think of her because now I'm distanced and I feel that I'm . . but I probably won't do and the other issue is that I'm probably wouldn't be strong enough to actually say but I'd love to because she's such an evil woman.

Helen

It was with regard to my relationship with my boss and it was in so far as she well I didn't have a very good working relationship with her and she handed her notice in. I got on with her quite well for a long time and for about six months before she handed her notice in the relationship the relationship deteriorated because of work pressures. It was really the last month of how to deal with the situation as far as the relationship and when it came to a head really was when I was doing a collection for her. The relationship between us had deteriorated quite badly and there was complete communication breakdown which was not very good for HR personnel. It was really just a question of at the time I actually had three colleagues leaving and she was the HR manager and I had to do collections for all three within a very short space of time and it was really a dilemma how much effort I put into it and my reaction to her and the feeling of doing the collection because I was aware that other people were aware that we weren't getting on and I felt that their eyes were on me and how I behaved in the situation and the collections went and I wasn't very happy with doing it at all I have to admit and I got a very poor response which I probably didn't help. As I say, I did three collections in about a week and a half. The first two I got a lot more money and I got less for her but it was also the dilemma – the problem was it was the end of the month and people were short of money and I wasn't very encouraging and enthused to ask people to give money.

CK: What were the reasons for that? Do you want to talk about the breakdown?

H: I didn't feel, I didn't feel that I was really bothered as to whether she was going or not, I suppose, and but obviously, with hindsight to a degree, I should have been more professional because the outcome was that she had quite a poor response and there might be a time in the future when I need to work with her and it's that breakdown in communication that's caused the problem and how much it would have affected her leaving and the opinion of others – not directly for myself but the fact that people could see this breakdown occurring.

CK: How did it sort of manifest itself? What . . .?

H: It originated from her professional – um, how can I put it? When I started working with her it was her first managerial job and we got on very well for about the first year. I'd worked with her previously – she worked for a temping agency and I'd temped through the agency and I got on very well with her – you know – she's a nice person out of work and um and then the pressure was getting on both of us and she – I felt that she didn't trust me – I felt she wasn't telling me anything and then I actually approached her about it and basically said, very tactfully because I didn't want to cause a problem, and I said to her that I felt that she didn't trust me and she obviously said that that wasn't the case but what came out was that she said to me that she needed to be in control and it was obvious that it wasn't that she didn't trust me it was either she didn't feel that someone else could do the work as well as her or felt that if she didn't do it it wouldn't get done and that was like the basis of it and things picked up for a while and then as the pressure increased it sort of went back to that and I spoke to her about it quite a few times and it was evident that she had an issue of doing it all herself rather than trusting someone else to do it and ensuring it was either done to her standard or done at all I suppose.

CK: Right – so she hadn't got any delegating skills.

H: No but I was conscious that we were an HR department and supposed to be approachable and all the rest of it and you should have a professional working relationship. I am aware that I was conscious of this and tried to rise above it and it just became very difficult and then in the last month instead of handing stuff over to me she just closed down completely and then because I was then left on my own I got a lot of hostility for her the fact that she didn't help me with the handover.

CK: So she dropped you in it when she went, really?

H: Yes and then there was. . . the ultimate thing was how I dealt with that collection because that was going to be obvious to everybody and what came out. The sequel is that I collected a lot more for the first one but she'd been there a long time – the second one had only been there a year and I collected the same amount for her as I did for my boss and she'd been there three years. And when it was spread down between flowers and a present and it became apparent that there wasn't much money and I was also not (?? Dog bark) I was also not in on the last day which didn't help – it was a day I'd had booked off for a long time because I had family coming to stay but I think that didn't go down well either – it wasn't perceived as a good thing. And then when I came in on the following Monday I actually got reprimanded by the general manager for not collecting enough money so that really made me more hostile and of course the situation is still going on now with people asking me if I've heard from her or spoken to her and I haven't. I'm to sort of wound up to do otherwise but, at the same time, I don't feel she acted totally professionally towards me either so but it was all but I felt very much that the eyes were on me and it was how I dealt with the situation and I have to say with hindsight that I probably didn't deal with it as professionally as I should have – you know – my feelings got carried away.

CK: Perhaps more honestly? (Laughter) Is she still with the company in another capacity or has she gone?

H: No, she's completely left. But it's the fact that I am still there and people will view me as behaving in a certain way and it was very difficult how to

behave I suppose and what became apparent from speaking to my general manager was that he'd been he'd understood or been given information of certain things occurring that hadn't so all these things that have come out since have obviously not helped my feelings but it's just the fact that there is a possibility in the future that I might have dealings with her because she works for a temping agency again. So that was it really, the stance and how I was viewed and what effect it had on her.

Isabel

Fairly recently, we had an incident at work where there was the availability for temporary promotion to take place. Now normally for temporary promotion we hold a Board as you would for any other promotion because temporary promotion can last for six months before it has to be either declared a vacancy or and obviously somebody's getting a ten per cent pay rise for whoever gets that position and obviously you get experience in the higher grade. I went out to college on one day knowing that there was a vacancy for this coming up and when I got back to work the following day there was a notice for me to issue to all staff telling me that a member of staff had been temporarily promoted into this vacancy without any Board having taken place. So I was quite angry because I also should have could have had the opportunity of that post along with a lot of other people that were also eligible to apply. So I was told that, yes, everything had been done, they'd been to see the management and the decision had been made – that was it. And I said, well I'm not accepting that and I went to our Equal Opportunities Officer who took up the case and got the management to turn round their decision. The post was then advertised correctly. The person who was originally given the job got the job which we always knew he would but at least we were given the opportunity. I have had a disciplinary action taken against me because I stood up for my rights and for the rights of other people. I was told that I shouldn't have interfered because I was only privy to that information because of the position that I held. But I feel morally that I did the right thing towards myself and the rest of my colleagues and I think for

the person who was actually being promoted because had that notice have gone out and then we'd have picked up an equal ops and turned it round that person would have suffered just more even than the fact that he'd been given it in one hand and taken away with the other even though he got it back again but it was all fixed but I think it's wrong that discipline was taken against me when I was actually sticking by the rules and making sure that everyone had the equal opportunities.

CK: Do you have the means of appealing against that decision?

I: My union rep is coming in on Wednesday to see my manager with me. I took it straight to the union and they are now asking for an informal meeting to try and sort it out but I suppose if we don't get the outcome we want we'll take it to formal grievance but I just think it was unfair when I was trying to stand up for everybody that I then got a disciplinary action against me for doing so.

CK: What decision did you have to make in all of that? The decision was . .

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I: I made the decision to tell the Equal Opportunities Officer what was going on.

CK: It's that decision that we need to explore really, isn't it?

I: Yes, I made that decision to speak to the Equal Opportunities Officer and to bring it to her attention for her to follow it through. I think my manager's biggest problem was that the Equal Opportunities Officer wouldn't wear it – she wouldn't listen to her. I feel that was her biggest problem why she took it out on me. When I challenged it I got somewhere and when she challenged it she was told "go away" politely. So I think that is why she took it out on me.

CK: What did she challenge, sorry?

I: Well, she had challenged with the management about not advertising the post. She was told to "go away, the decision had been made end of story". But you see when I challenged it although the final outcome was the same we were actually given the opportunity to apply and were boarded.

CK: So you succeeded where she hadn't?

I: Yes and I think that's why she took it out on me if you know what I mean.

CK: Why do you think you succeeded and she didn't? Was it just the fact of a second person having a go?

I: I think because I have more credibility that she had with the manager involved because I've been in the service 11 years and she's been in less than six months and has got no previous history within the service and doesn't have a lot of credibility with the management or anybody else because she doesn't know the rules and regulations.

Joanne

Right, fine, um . . . Obviously it's work related, there's a couple of areas really. Recently, we did um we had a transfer, a TUPE transfer at work whereby we used to work for, or we used to do work on behalf of (public utility). The (public utility) set up an agency with (local authority) to do drainage works that needed doing within the borough and they would pay the authority a sum of money, quite a large sum of money and (local authority) would then carry out this work and not too unexpectedly but much earlier than expected they cancelled the agency. Last June they gave notice that as from 31 March this year the agency would be cancelled and really from that point on management attitude towards the staff and the things that were going on were very different. There are certain rules and regulations that are required connected to TUPE transfers – certain things that have to happen – and when it's TUPE it's unavoidable but there was also sorts of toings and froings about their pensions. First of all they would be able to stay in the

local government scheme then they wouldn't. Then they hadn't got to transfer, there was a separate clause that was going to be OK'd and so they told all the people quite close to the end "no, you haven't got to go, you can stay with (local authority) if you want to" and then two days . . . some people actually rang (public utility) and said "no, we're not coming, we're going to stay with (local authority), we don't want to work for you" and then two days later (local authority) said "no, TUPE applies, you've got to go". And there were a lot of things going on which as part of my job I knew about but wasn't actually able to tell these people and it affected their lives, their livelihood, where they worked, how they worked, who they worked for. There were a number of people who wanted to retire - early retirement – they'd got their years in with (local authority) and there were huge debates going on behind the scenes as to whether these people would be allowed to, whether (public utility) would pay, whether (public utility) wouldn't pay and really all of these things were going on and the fact that this was people's livelihoods, everything that they knew to be secure in their work terms was all being thrown out of the window it appeared on the whim of three or four people in the board room, you know, and I found that very difficult. It was hard to do my job because it was hard not to tell them what was happening because I felt quite strongly that they had a right to know and that it was, to some degree, it was more than my job was . . . In the position that I am in as a personnel person I wasn't able to tell them and I was liaising with people who were also in a similar sort of position at (public utility) but also the senior management within (local authority) seemed to be riding roughshod over people's lives and it was really hard to . . . In the end, everybody did transfer, some of them happy, some of them not very happy but the one guy virtually had a nervous breakdown over it. The divisional manager was one of the ones that was strangely – he was almost desperate to stay at (local authority). He was 46 and he'd got 20 odd years in with (local authority). He'd always paid into the pension scheme which meant that he was faced with. . . He'd also planned to retire early, probably in about ten years time but of course he was then faced with the issue that he could either take his pension out of (local authority)'s pension scheme and transfer it into (public utility) whereby he would lose something in the region of about nine years on his pension or leave it where it

was and freeze it by which he wouldn't be allowed to received it until he was 60. He was one of the people who when they said that there'd been a clause in the actual transfer agreement which meant that they had the option to stay was one of the people who phoned up (public utility) immediately and said "we've been told we don't have to leave (local authority), I'm going to stay – I don't want to come and work for you, I want to stay here". Of course he then had to backtrack on all of that and was forced almost – well – if it had come to the wire (public utility) would have been forced to take him because it applied and he was trying to find all sorts of ways not to go and really, at the end of the day, there was just no way he could stay and it was obvious that there was no way that he could stay to everybody else but him and it was really difficult to deal with because it almost felt that because the authority had messed him about so much that they really to some degree – well you can't say that they owed it to him to let him stay because it was never really possible.

CK: There was never a job there for him . . .

J: No, but it just felt that they handled the situation so badly that it was really really difficult and the fact that they didn't care for any of them they gave the impression that they didn't care. They gave lip service to a lot of things when really you know it was very difficult.

CK: We need to focus on one particular decision – in a way you were making a decision about not telling the people all that you knew. You knew that there were things going on in the background.

J: That's right.

CK: And we need to concentrate around that decision in that whole context. Is that OK?

J: Yes, that 's fine.

CK: Thanks

Ken

OK, um, well there are sort of several – I seem to have been faced with lots of dilemmas over the past five or six years but the one I thought I'd describe was that a year or so ago well for some years I actually ran a department within a college whose purpose it was to really run the college's access to European funding and the college actually was inspected in the January and the report came out in March and it found that there were areas where it lacked quite a little bit, well, quite a lot of professionalism really I suppose. For instance, the data that it collected was found to be very suspect, not necessarily, I don't think anyone was suggesting that it was um that the college was trying to defraud the system or anything like that, it was just really incompetent at collecting the data properly, that's what it boiled down to. We weren't actually involved in any way with the collection of that data so didn't feel responsible for that although obviously it impinged on what we were doing because we relied largely on that data or people we were talking to in the college relied on that data. Therefore, we had just collected the data we needed to collect for that year's returns. We had to make returns every year and we had to collect it. We collected it in January and February so we collected it whilst the college was being inspected and then we continued to collect it and to manipulate it and then when we discovered that there was a problem with the, not necessarily our data but data per se in the college, we were actually then faced with a dilemma as to what we would do because, I mean we'd collected the data, we'd done it in good faith but we knew, suspected that some of it was, well may have been suspect in some way or another so the dilemma was as to whether we should actually go back and revisit the whole lot or whether we should actually ignore it and submit the data. It would have been easier to submit the data, I guess, because there's no work involved in that. However, we had got consultants who were being paid not by us but by the Further Education Funding Council to look at the situation so there was a little bit of pressure to conform, to actually say "well

there is a problem there" but nonetheless the easiest thing would have been to ignore it. Also, in highlighting the problem I guess we held ourselves up to be sort of examined that little bit further so it was the hard thing to do to say "hang on we think we might have a problem or in the light of the findings over there we feel we have to in all honesty reexamine this data" and that was essentially the dilemma, really.

CK: What did you decide to do?

K: We decided to hold our hands up and say "we think we have a problem with the data" and so we went back and we revisited it and where we hadn't got any collaborative evidence for individual claims as it were we didn't submit the claim so essentially we had two pieces of hard evidence for every claim we made or two lots of data, one of which collaborated the other and that went through without any problem and eventually it wasn't actually apart from the pain of sort of reconstituting the data and re-examining it, apart from that there was no sort of aftermath, there was no sort of reexamination of it, which turned out to be OK – that worked out well I think.

CK: And the data related presumably to people attending courses did it? And the nature of their background and so on if you were aiming to hit certain types of people and you were wanting to gather data around that?

K: That's it – very important really, I mean, and the amount of money was significant by anybody's standards it was a lot of money and to be seen to be doing the right thing was really quite important for your own sake really, as well as anyone else's, more for your own sake really.

Leo

The situation at work, where a colleague who was more of a friend as well which is part of the problem was having problems with his boss and basically the end result was that he would attempt to rally round and ask colleagues

and friends to back him in the decisions he was going to make in terms of not rebelling but putting up a stance against the management or the directorship. Those are the basics of the problem. Do you want that fleshing out?

CK: Yes please.

L: He's been there quite a long time the chap has – he knows the job quite well. The chap that he was working for, the MD, had made various decisions because of the previous sales director leaving. The MD took over the sales directorship and general responsibilities and made various decisions based on his experience and his knowledge of the company as it stands. The problem there was that his knowledge of the company wasn't as vast as the people that had been there a long time, this chap being one of them. Over a period of time, the questions were asked of the group from the MD and slowly they began to realise that he wasn't going to make the right decisions so they tried to put their points forward, made recommendations, give ideas of what the results would give, to no avail really, he still got his own way. So the chap himself I think it became more personal than anything else. It was a crusade for him. I think the other people were in the same boat but weren't as direct as him in terms of their daily contact with the MD. So he was in a position that he could see, the company could see, certain people could see that possibly there would be because of some of the decisions made a need to reduce numbers. While he saw there was a need to reduce numbers, he also saw that it would possibly be in his department which he wasn't happy with based on the fact that the reason for reducing numbers was avoidable, if you like, if the decision hadn't been made. And the instance where I knew that I'd have to make a decision was I'd done a lot of work for this chap in the past in terms of personally and a couple of times he's wanted some reports doing for him and I've helped him with those.

CK: That's not the MD, that's the person we're talking about?

L: That's T. So he became a good friend and colleague and I'd always said that if there was anything he needs, give us a shout and I'd help, and I

remember the day he said "yeah, I will need some help". I said "not a problem". He says, "well, it'll be a bit more than help". I didn't really know what was coming, to be truthful. But then a couple of weeks later he did tell me that what he was going to do was to try to rally round and rebel against it and basically go on strike. There's no union at work so it made it all that much more difficult. I am sure that he's the sort of chap that thinks things out but I think under that sort of animosity, under that sort of pressure, he may make the wrong decision. I had a feeling because we did later on have redundancies. I had a feeling that something was going to happen in terms of him speaking because he spoke to two or three of the other managers as well and to be truthful they just shrugged it off and said "no, we're not going to do this". I think one person did and it was a really awkward situation for me because this was a friend, you know, and that's no reason for doing it but I basically believed he was right, by the way, that the MD should have listened to him because at the end of the term of redundancies, and when things settled down, he went back to him and said "what can we do now, I've made a mistake". I thought he was right before that happened because of the fact that we were losing customers. The day of the redundancy was a Monday and I was at college and he rallied round a little bit on that Monday, I believe, to the other managers and they refused him from which he has recently been calling them spineless and things like that which again that's his animosity talking.

CK: So the MD put the redundancies into action?

L: And got rid of two from his department without asking who they were. It being a Monday, I wasn't there, I was at college, I was here. So I didn't get asked which made the decision very easy for me because if he'd have come up to me and asked me that question I'd have had to say "no".

CK: Would you?

L: Yeah, because of – I mean he's a friend, a colleague, we have been out together but I am not too sure what I'd be risking and the way it worked out –

I mean I say I'd say "no" without the evidence of what's happened with the rest of the people well I suppose that has some sort of bearing on it what the other managers did, but I wasn't put in that situation, thankfully. Our friendship has remained albeit I mean I question whether my friendship is true or not, my loyalty true or not but to a point you know I will help and assist him more than most people and vice versa. I mean can you measure friendship by that decision? I don't know, I don't know. I didn't think too much about it because I wasn't put in that position. It may have been that if he'd asked me that question, I'd have said "let me think over it" because he hasn't got a family either. He's also got a situation where in five years his wife will take over a shop and he may go and help run the shop. He'd got some security and we'd got nothing like that. What we've got is what we've got and there's lots of things come into it. I didn't really have a chance to think too much about it which pleased me because I didn't want to. If he'd asked the question I think I'd have considered it quite deeply. I didn't have to answer the question or think about the consequences. He's still there, he's looking elsewhere now and he will do for a long time because he's not happy there while he's under the regime of the MD. We've now employed a new sales, senior sales manager – I think he's a director designate – who is carrying out the tasks and putting into action some of the things that they said should have been done. It creates more a feeling that they weren't being listened to. It wasn't just one of them, there was a group of them – two people internal sales and we've got external agents as well who were included in the advice to the MD.

CK: So this T was he a peer of yours or was he, you know, in terms of the level of . . .?

L: We were all managers. It's ever so difficult at W's because it was built up owned by two brothers, a private company, and it is very sort of autocratic – it's a word I heard every day when I first started, autocratic. They used to call them Mr J and Mr P so they hired a consultant to come and put technology in, new advances in manufacturing techniques and he swept out the managementship. When I first started there I was a business analyst,

things like that, you know, sort of rather than the level of a manager you've got a responsibility level which included lots of people's roles rather than just managing people. The management structure's now been embedded back in because that chap's since left two or three years ago and there are some that have took the managementship on and run with it in terms of how they've handled it and there are some that can't handle it to be truthful because of their background. They were never expected to do that. A lot of what was said at where I work was that if people aren't told to do it they won't do it and that was the sort of ethos if you like, the philosophy of the way some people work. We're trying to get them now to think for themselves and to sort of take their own actions and get involved. A long process but. . .

Mark

It was as a result of the restructuring processes that began over a year ago – began in the summer and autumn of 1999. One of those restructuring processes was in one particular (department) which was being merged and as a result of that decisions were taken at the management level which didn't affect me about a new structure which meant a reduced number of posts at Principal (of division) level compared to the number of postholders that there currently were in the two parts of the (department). We as the union accepted that argument because we knew we supported the merger – the merger was by and large being run correctly with full consultation and everybody in the (department) theoretically recognised the problems that would result, the difficulties of putting a quart into a pint pot. I suspect that everybody of course thought that it won't affect me so in theory accepting the logic of it and everybody also realised that with one half of the department in particular losing vast amounts of money that there would be cuts at some point. The slight unfairness of the whole situation is of course that as the re-structuring was only done at management level that is to say division manager, subject leader and so on, that it wasn't really a clear out of surplus staff, it was a clear out of surplus managers only and the issue of there being too many staff was still bound to crop up at some stage but that was something everybody put

off. In this particular division it was decided that there would only be one Principal. There were currently two Principals and that was just purely historic because of situations that had happened in the past, transfers in from other (firms) that we merged with, and so on. And so a post had been protected and was still there. The logic was however that there should only be one (Principal post) there. Now, that's the background so far – do you want me to go into details now?

CK: Yes, now go into details, thank you.

M: Well, specifically what happened was that we had a union policy internal to the union here although following national principles which is that when we negotiated a procedure for restructuring in different (departments) and this was established in one of the other (departments) entirely separate from this that when current Principal postholders were applying for the new Principal posts that the permanent Principals should be given first bite and if there were any posts left over as a result of that the temporary Principals (because there were quite a few, a minority, but a few people who were on two-year Principalships, Acting Principalships, and so on, that they should then be given the second bite of the cherry. You can see all sorts of arguments for that being unfair but it was national policy about defending core staff and so on. So, we went with that. That of course meant that in this particular division the historic Principal of the division would have the right of choice which would exclude therefore and quite logically from that post the other Principal who was temporary who was currently running the division. Now that straightaway created a dilemma but we had to follow the policy. However, there's another side to all this that we knew, we just knew from word on the ground, from attitudes of management, that in fact that they would turn the permanent Principal postholder, because it was historic, because s/he hadn't been doing a Principal's job for quite some time but taking a Principal's salary, that they would find an excuse to turn her/him down and then in the second swathe they would offer that post to the temporary Principal holder who was currently running the division. So, in a sense, we were taking the easy option of following policy knowing that in the

end they would get who they wanted. Now the complication came when the temporary Principal holder took out a grievance complained against the union policy, (this person is a union member) and decided to take out a grievance. S/he wasn't sure who s/he was taking the grievance against exactly but on the grounds that s/he considered that it was unfair that s/he should be excluded as a temporary postholder. Now there were very specific dilemmas in that situation and I'm sorry it's going to get more and more complicated.

CK: It's all right.

M: Namely, that I was away at the time – I was chair of the union and I was away at the time on a research visit and the immediate advice that was given by the local union branch officers was that s/he had a case and should be included in the first swathe of applications that s/he should have equal rights. Now when I came back I discovered that this advice had been given and it was actually contrary to what the policy we'd agreed so I overruled it, knowing that that would mean that s/he would be excluded from that first choice but I still knew s/he'd get the job. I'm not stupid, I knew s/he would get it but I also knew that s/he would then possibly take out a grievance against us although that actually is not allowed in the (college) there isn't a structure that allows you to do that but I knew that there would be some flak. Sure enough, there was. The complication then arose that she then produced a letter from the (head of department) that had gone to all the Principals, including only two temporary Principals in the whole (department), indicating that they had the same rights to apply for all these jobs as everybody else so she was actually getting contradictory advice. I then had to take a decision, there and then, right I have no choice but to go with what the (head of department) effectively has by breaching the procedure that s/he has effectively given his/her rights which I am sure in the Industrial Tribunal would be upheld. And that, in a sense, that's what I had to think. Whenever there's a grievance you have to think ahead and think "how would this play in an Industrial Tribunal?" and I was convinced that that letter was a smoking gun, that it would effectively give this person the right to challenge that policy and to be considered in the first round. A la that of course then there

was a dilemma, because would they hold up all the applications while this was sorted out? I couldn't see it. Then it was going to create a mess somewhere along the lines so I had to take a quick decision that s/he should be allowed to apply even though it went against several principles I had little choice but to do that I felt and I of course produced the inevitable effect which was s/he got the job, the permanent postholder didn't and was aggrieved and there was no place for her/him and we knew the rules which were people who were displaced at that level had several choices which were "do you want to be hanged or garrotted?" really. The choice was either voluntary redundancy, are you downgraded if there is a post for you as a downgraded post for you, or can we try and find another job for you somewhere else in the (college)? That was the dilemma. Except that I convinced myself that that was the dilemma this person was going to have anyway, that once s/he'd not been appointed which I knew was going to happen, because they clearly fixed the job descriptions in such a way that they could appoint who they wanted so I knew it was going to happen it was just a question as a result it made us as the union and me in specifically look the guilty party and in a way we were for agreeing that policy in the first place, but that's the dilemma.

Neil

I think the main exercise which I am engaged is having taken over this new job at a time of new recruitment and restructuring. The main aim was to try to work our way through that period of transition with at one level the least damage to staff and hopefully as a result of any rationalisation and restructuring that went on to get ourselves on a firmer basis therefore for moving forward out of that rather critical phase. That would be the situation when I started my job on 1 January when the division heads were all appointed at roughly the same time so there are five division heads within the school and this is an experiment this is a university experiment. We're not really (deputy heads) although one of the difficulties is precisely how we are seen and what our status is. It was made very clear to me in my interview

that I was now management. Well that I accept but precisely what level of management I am I am not absolutely sure and I am not sure the other division heads are absolutely sure either. At one level there is quite a high degree of uncertainty which derives in part I think from the fact that these are experiments but the restructuring is finally the result of the merging of two schools within the (institution). In my own division there are numerable awards, lots of awards relating to different subjects, history, politics, urban studies, war studies, European studies, Latin American studies and applied theology which is somewhat more marginal because of the particular state and position of the applied theology staff who are first and foremost chaplains in the (institution) so their link with my position is not the same as the other subjects. But the situation for instance this year with the last recruitment was not encouraging – history took a 25% drop in recruitment and has always been a very strong recruiter within the university. Politics has been declining for some time and has almost disappeared out of sight. European Studies and Latin American Studies who are subjects inherited from the W... end of the (department) are also very low recruiters. American Studies is certainly nowhere near recruiting what it was say five or six years ago. The only subject really which has held its own is war studies. So the position I inherited is one which – I won't use the word crisis – but it was one of certainly a situation which had a number of serious problems which had to be addressed. One of my concerns and, in a sense, I felt a moral base to this. I felt one of my priorities in terms of what I should do should be to do my best without any guarantee of success, realising I am just one cog in a fairly complex machine, I felt that one of my concerns was to try to protect the jobs of my staff or at least as many staff as possible and that has a moral basis to it. They are people who I know work very hard, are very good on the whole at what they do and it is not necessarily though any fault of theirs that they happen to be in a position of declining recruitment. The new (department) when it was set up had a combined debt of something like £1.5m. Now that meant we had to make economies. We have lost £0.5m of that debt over this last year. One of the things that we've done is to reduce our dependence on visiting (teachers) by a very considerable degree. Now that up to a point has moral implications because you have to make a choice. I mean they are

people just like everyone else. You have to make a decision that you can't employ everybody who do you have to let go and I think the decision has to be you have to let go those staff who are most loosely attached and that was the decision that was taken though not with any relish from my point of view because I know quite a number of the (visiting teachers) who have worked for us over the years and have had to say to them "look, as from this academic year which began in September, we cannot guarantee you will be employed this year" and that was a difficult thing to have to say knowing the kind of contribution, essential contribution many of them had played over a number of years. And even when we have kept people on, for instance, we have had in a number of cases to seriously reduce the amount of hours that we can offer them. Now I think in a way we have found ourselves between a rock and a hard place on that one but there is a real issue that real choices have to be made. They are not easy ones because they affect people's individual careers and condition. At one level that's a factor. But then the corollary of that is that we've had to use staff we've had to the fullest extent and that's just meant being much tougher on people teaching up to their banded hours. We've implemented very strictly within the (department). This is not my idea although I've gone along with it believing it to be right in the present set up. The idea of a banded hour – if someone is on a banding of 400 – the contract is 550 – most people do research in our division or everybody or almost everybody is a personal tutor. That, together, is 150 hours. The average teaching load is 400 and people then get other things taken off for special responsibilities so I am actually on 200 because of the division management and so on. There are a number of people but not necessarily as low as that but with considerable administrative roles over and above the 450 but whatever the figure that is the figure those are banded hours between 450 and 150 and so there is a tremendous amount of slack and you could say waste in the system which partly contributed to the fact that the deficit was such so we have tried to be both lean and very spare. One of the hardest things that some people who have not been worked terribly hard or where it didn't matter too much before the merger, if somebody was banded for 450 and only did 250 it didn't really matter because there wasn't the pressure then. Now there is the pressure and what it means is that some people have

actually a very severe increase in their teaching load up to their band because you know the difference between their band and what they were actually doing last year was far too wide and we've had to give them extra teaching. Now, in doing this to be fair, it seems to me that the first principle, to add a kind of moral dimension to it, if I should try to preserve the jobs of my staff to the best of my ability – I see that as my first aim – the other way to look at that is to say we've immediately got to start and say we've got to slim down and we'll identify those whose services we feel are less valuable and we'll chop them off at source. Now I'm actually not prepared to do that and I have to say that I am supported in that by senior management within the (department), at least for the time being. We are trying to make the economies within the division and look for the benefits whilst retaining such staff that we have. So that, I have no problem with that as trying to work to preserve the jobs of the people who have them. But the next principle, which I think again has a strong kind of moral base to it, is that we should seek to be – I should try to be equitable then in terms of the work that one is expecting of one's staff and therefore it isn't fair if some people are working hard right up to their banding, but one of the key factors is to try to be transparently even-handed. That seems to me to be a fundamental principle here that people should not be saying "eh, hang on, so-and-so, they are 50 hours or even 100 hours below their band" and we have had a problem there because some people were well below their band and the reason we've done that – we've tried to bring them up to their band as close as possible – is partly because of losing (visiting teachers) and we also lost four people through voluntary redundancy as well so we've actually had little choice. One reason is because we need to use them in order to deliver but the other reason is so that there is equitability within the division which is open and accepted. Those have been my kind of two principles. Actually implementing it has been quite difficult because people have, not many, I have to say this and perhaps for the first five months I was on my own. There were no subject leaders it was me supported by other colleagues. In a few cases it has been very difficult and some have actually not been prepared to accept the hours of teaching which they have been given. And one or two members of staff have been particularly persistent in their opposition to that claiming things like

"this is unfair" "I can't do this" "I should not be expected to do this". Now when they say things like "this is unfair" that raises a moral issue so far as I am concerned and that places me I would say in a dilemma because I think there is a moral issue but I think the moral issue is whether to say "OK " and keep everything sweet and I understand what they're saying and I'll give in to them which in terms of popularity would be easy but what I tried to do and it has happened with a very close friend who hardly speaks to me now – whether she was seeing that because of the personal friendship I would be a soft touch I would be indulgent towards what she wanted I don't know but I find I can't have a kind of rational discussion about these kinds of matters, that it has become now very much a kind of correspondence by email. I mean I have the support of my senior colleagues and those immediately below me so it's not as though I feel in a sense myself isolated but my stance is that that would be the easy way, that what I think the moral principle overriding this is actually the transparent equitability of that ... and my own feeling is that this person, if I were to give in to this person, it would be unfair on the rest but when you're confronted by that and you realise that your relationship with that person is being detrimentally affected then that is actually the nub – hang on – do I want to go this way? It has presented actually some difficulties. In my previous job I was as a principal (teacher) but my main responsibilities was as a programme manager as a course manager so my responsibilities there were primarily to manage students not staff. I was responsible for a group of senior counsellors who helped with the kind of academic side of the course but relationships were not tested in the way in my new job managing staff but I am no longer programme manager but I am division leader and my prime responsibility is to manage my staff so what the new job has meant to me is these moral decisions which I am now forced to make and some of them do mean a different relationship between myself and people with whom I had a former relationship at a similar level. You realise that people are treating you rather differently now, perhaps a little more suspiciously about what you are going to do and maybe not trusting. You know I would like to think that people could trust me but it's unclear as yet.

CK: You're an unknown quantity still

N: About that. But the easy way in the short term view is to remain friends and it is easier to do that but morally I don't think I should actually and I think I should stick out for the underlying principle which is to try to protect the interest of staff as best we can and secondly to try to ensure that so far as is humanly possible that there is a kind of equitability about the way I manage so that people really feel that they are not being exploited more than anybody else but that has not been easy.

CK: Are you going to focus down on that decision in relation to the particular person who was a friend?

N: Can do – yes.

CK: That seemed to bring about some moral dilemmas around that situation.

N: OK.

CK: The constraint of my project is that I need to look at a moment in time while understanding the complexity at the same time. You'll see how it works . . .

N: OK I'll change the subject.

CK: Are you going to talk about that a bit more?

N: I'll go into more detail.

CK: Yes, that would be helpful, thank you.

N: You need to understand the context, I think. She has not worked full-time for over four years. She has had a child who is now 4. She had her maternity leave. She came back for 2 years or more. She didn't resume full-time work

until this semester. At Easter and Easter as you well know is half way through the semester so when she came back after Easter there was no way that because of the operational exigencies that we could give her a full-time job. But I think what happened is that she hadn't been full-time for over 4 years and when she was full-time before life was much gentler and now, of course, it isn't gentle at all because of the situation that we find ourselves in. So she's a very devoted mother. She's also having another baby and in fact I have had an email today to say that she will be taking her maternity leave much earlier than she originally planned but she's not young so for her own welfare, I understand that. I think she used to be a senior counsellor and she got an allowance for that. She decided I am not sure why that she didn't want to continue counselling in the new merged (department) – a slightly different kind of organisation which came in last September which worked quite well but because of that she was one of the people who was working well under her banding. I suspect for the last four or five years she hadn't done more than 150 or 175 hours. She is in her 40's, she's very devoted (which I absolutely applaud) but I think she was overwhelmed by the prospect of having to do considerably more teaching than she had done and she let me know initially what areas she was prepared to teach in. She no longer wished to teach in the specialist area she was appointed to teach in because she said there were ... . The problem in that situation is that where we have got expertise we have to use it. There is no way that people can say "well, I am only going to teach that" – we have to use the range of expertise that we have got. So she hasn't quite got what she wants in that respect. She is having to do teaching which otherwise she would have preferred to have given up. But if she had given up I would have had to pay an outsider to come in and I am not in the position to be able to do that so that was one issue. But the other issue was just simply the sheer volume of teaching that she was being offered and she compared herself with another female colleague who at the time – she felt she was doing more than this other colleague so she wanted parity with this other colleague. The other colleague was in a different situation because she was actually on sabbatical and therefore what she was doing ... ... But she must have got hold of the hours and it was like a red rag to a bull "I must be doing more than ... that's not fair. I want to see other

people's hours. Why should I – I don't think it's fair that I should have to do five modules a semester." I had to point out that there were eventually – she wouldn't take my word for it which was difficult – and I had to produce evidence that teaching five modules for somebody on 400 or a little bit less was actually the norm rather than the exception. But she still wasn't very happy, it has to be said and first opportunity she got to in a sense try to put me on the spot around her introductory module where we have as many staff as we possibly can on board in order to give the students the opportunity to meet, she had a Friday afternoon along with another colleague who happened to be a (visiting teacher) and this year we weren't able to keep her on. Her contract was a temporary one and we had to say "sorry we can't . . " you know, and that was actually very difficult because she had been a tremendous colleague and we had to say "no more work, this is the end". Another colleague was teaching on Friday afternoon and he asked through the Research Committee for a bit of extra time so that he could do some proof reading, corrections and so on and I said "yes, there aren't enough students to justify three seminar groups on a Friday afternoon due to the recruitment situation". Anyway, this particular individual came marching in here to say "why has so-and-so been taken off Friday afternoons?" and I began to try to explain although I was completely put on the spot because I'd been doing something else and she said "I don't think it's fair, I don't think it's fair" and she walked out. What do you do in that situation? What the subject leader said was where recruitment is low and we can't justify the extra seminar group across the year, we will ensure that that is evened out. We will try and ensure that one person doesn't lose 50 hours and everyone else finishes up. We will track this and make sure and sure enough . . . I didn't think it was any of her business the fact that we had taken this other colleague and given some relief because of his special circumstances. There are times when however open and consultative one wants to be, one just has to make a decision. You can't forever keep things open for approval to 30 odd people – that's not management, that's chaos. So I felt she was out of order. Then only about a fortnight later, when we looked at the evidence, the returns of the students for a series of optional case studies, one of which she was down to do, we found that when we looked at student registrations hardly any

students had adopted the case study so we took a decision that to have a group of two was not viable in that situation and so for those reasons we pulled her out of the case study and my concern there was in case she thought that this was because of the pressure she had put on before that this was my softening response. It wasn't at all it was for purely logistical reasons but it was also – we thought (the subject leader and I) consistent with our principle that we would try and even out any kind of little benefits which might accrue which would bring people right up to their limit. The subject leader was then responsible for this person's appraisal and also responsible for sorting out a timetable for her going in the light of her pregnancy which she announced to us in October. But it has been since then it has been very – I hate to use the word "frosty" but that's how it's been and she has been saying things I would say is a bit out of turn which is kind of casting aspersions on the way that we have in fact, for instance, she should originally have had a sabbatical for the second semester and they're like golddust but she didn't seem terribly enthusiastic about it compared with other people who were almost crying their eyes out because they didn't get it, anyway and so we had to reconstruct the timetable so we used the timetable for last year for the basis for that. It happened that we had to put in a little extra because otherwise it would have looked so impossibly low compared with everybody else. By this time, interestingly, she wasn't actually making the point about unfairness because I think she'd had it instilled into her very firmly by the subject leader that in fact she was very low. She was one of those people who wanted the hours published across the division so that she could see what everyone else was doing but this would have the reverse effect because it would show that because we had had to make such significant amendment to Semester Two teaching in the light of some seminar groups and some modules not running that . . . But we offered her two modules, Thursday morning and Thursday evening but I guess we ought to have thought about this a little bit more but she wrote to say that "I can't do a twelve hour day, starting at 10 and going on to 9, because of my condition". So the subject leader came to see me and we decided to accede to this and because we actually needed her on both modules because of her expertise, when she was on in a morning, she would not do the evening, and vice versa and this was settled. Two days after that

was settled she told another colleague who reported it to the subject leader "oh, she said, I am being asked to teach a twelve-hour day". Well, that was it, and that had been resolved and we had dealt with it. So it has been very difficult and I know we haven't heard the last yet. It has been the most, there have been other problems which have been of the same kind but less in degree but that is the most acute problem. It does throw into sharp focus, I think, it forces you to think about the principles on which you're acting. In a kind of more informal social situation one would be going out of one's way to accede to the kind of request – she's quite an old woman and I wouldn't want to jeopardise anything, that would be awful and yet, at the same time, there is I think that wider view about fairness and that whilst there are extenuating circumstances, we will obviously be professional. I have consulted, because I have not been sure how to handle this, increasingly, I have spoken to two of my female senior colleagues to get their advice and offered the opportunity to talk to them if that is what she would like but basically they are in sympathy. Both of them have had babies, three in each case I think and have done similar things, carried on working, etc, and both of them are saying that if they carried on working they could not make the babies the excuse. That's been a difficult one because it has placed quite strong personal tension against a moral issue. I have gone with the moral issue, my view of the moral issue – I know there are other views of the moral issue – but I have gone with the moral issue as I have seen it and that I am afraid has had a detrimental effect on the friendship.

N: Thank you very much indeed, I think it would be helpful if we could focus on the time when she came in and walked out and your decision at that point to stay with it and the fact that she hadn't challenged it and to look at the thoughts in your head at that particular point because that's what I am needing to do I am afraid.

Owen

OK – so it is the restructuring process, begin with that. The (department) of which I am a part was originally two (departments) which merged about a year and a half ago. That restructuring, the coming together of those two (departments), led to a restructuring of the management (sections) that existed. One of the changes in the structure was because now that the (department) was going to be quite a large (department), in fact the largest in the (educational institution), it was decided that having divisions corresponding to (sections) as the basic unit of the (department) was inappropriate. There were too many of them and it was decided to have (sections) gathered together into larger divisions organised to some extent according to commonality and a whole lot between (sections). So, for example, (s) went together with (m) and © (s), the (l) came together and so on, into the five divisions. The senior positions within the (department), well, there was a (head) for each (department) and this was replaced by one (head) and one of the two (heads) got that job. There were various associate (heads) within the (department) and people who already were associate (heads) under the ... . were invited to apply for those posts and that was sorted out. Then there were the heads of the divisions. That meant that those five jobs applications were invited from existing principal lecturers who might be interested in those five jobs and with the proviso that if any post were not filled there would then be – applications would then be invited from other members of staff, academic staff, and if not filled then presumably they would have gone outside. In the event, four of those were filled. What wasn't one person applied for it and didn't get it. Following that a couple of things kind of came together. There was the issue of what to do about the remaining head of division post and then there were the various posts at principal lecturer level within the (department). I think the real thorny nasty issue really because it was a restructuring the (department) management and the (educational institution) wanted to interview for the various senior posts within the (department) including all the principal lecturer level posts and the union was advised I understand that in a restructuring that that had to happen

because there was a change in management structure. There couldn't be just a straightforward carrying over of existing posts. But what it opened up was the possibility of people who had been principal lecturers for years having to apply as it were for a job at their own level and if they were unsuccessful that they might be either demoted or even might take redundancy or whatever. Now I think that position was worked out between the union and the (educational institution) after a restructuring of another (department) there had been quite a few (department) restructurings recently. Actually the first one was this one and so the union's position was worked out with the (educational institution) and was established following that. I was a member of the union coordinating committee but I wasn't actually involved in working out the principles for restructuring at all but certainly I became involved when restructuring started to work through in my own (department). As I say, the nasty possibility really arose of people having to apply for their own jobs and then not getting them and then having to either take redundancy or be demoted or find a PL level post outside of the (department) so you know a pretty messy process. Well of course yeah, I can't remember what the timing of this was but the (educational institution) also introduced a voluntary redundancy scheme and quite a few people went as part of that and there was quite a lot of unhappiness particularly in one of the (departments) that went into the merged (department) about how it looked and so forth.

CK: How many posts were they looking to lose?

O: They were looking to lose about 40 to 50 people at (educational institution) level about half the academic staff. In the event I think they got more academic staff than they wanted. I think about nine or ten went from our (department). But, you know, it was indicative of the demoralisation particularly in one of the (departments) which had a deficit. Both (departments) had a deficit but one of them had a larger one and it was one of the tasks of the restructuring to get the (department) making a profit. So you know there were different tensions over all of that.

Now coming back to the heads of division posts when I sitting with my union hat met for one of several meetings with management in the course of last year and proceedings to discuss restructuring that post came up. The head of (department) announced to the three (union) reps that were there that that job would be advertised nationally and I said "well, hold on a minute, you said it was going to be advertised internally if it wasn't filled". He said " oh, well . . . ." and put up a little bit of an argument for it and I said "well that was what you said and people are taking redundancy and if the job goes outside of the (educational institution) that's one more potential redundancy or two more even". And we talked about it for a while and we moved on to something else and at the end of the meeting he came back to this and he said "look, is it (union)'s position that this job should be advertised internally?" And that really put me on the spot without a doubt because I was interested in the job. So I said "well, look, you know, I don't think the union's got an agreed position, all I'm doing is reminding you what you said you were going to do but I will make inquiries and I will give you a decision later in the afternoon". So I came out of that and I went for a coffee with the three other (union) reps and I said "look, I am a bit on a back foot here because I am actually interested in applying for this job" and they said "OK". I said "this is what I propose to do – the union secretary for the (educational institution) as a whole was away at the time so I said I'd go and talk to him deputy the person who was standing in for him so I got on to him then and their immediate response was that it absolutely should be advertised internally if we are expecting people to take voluntary redundancy and if there is even a possibility of compulsory redundancy if we don't get enough. So I got back to my head of (department) and he said "OK, I'll take that into account". Now, I suppose in a way there's not a dilemma in that but that could certainly be seen and I was concerned that it shouldn't be seen as my getting an advantage from my union position but I talked to a few people about it and I thought "well, you know, it was in the interests of any of our members to be able to go for that position and we were keeping the (department) leadership to what they had said they would do" and the normal equal opportunities issues in advertising nationally were being set aside because of the redundancy issues. So the fact that I personally stood to gain from it was no reason for me in my union hat

to not pursue that. I would have done so even if I hadn't been personally interested. Two other people did actually apply for it. So I wasn't too worried about it from a moral point of view but what I was worried about was concerned was to talk to other people and discuss it and make sure that I wasn't seeing things too much from my own point of view and that other people thought I was doing the right thing, people from the union. So it was all resolved amicably enough. I suppose within the (department) that became part of the picture around the PL level posts as well and as it turned out something like six or seven people at that level going for head of subject posts. Some of them, one at least, had actually occupied that post previously and I think only two of them in the end of the existing ones were actually appointed so they had to get jobs outside the (department) or be demoted, or take redundancy. Some took redundancy, some were demoted, some got posts outside the (department). While that was going on, the management, the head of (department), had the opportunity to bring on certain people and to let certain people go who had been doing the job. I must admit again I felt pretty bad about that I mean it seemed to me that if you got promoted and it was a permanent position which these posts had been then it shouldn't be revisited x years further down the line and your job suddenly up for grabs and you having to reapply for it and I thought it was very bad certainly what happened to some of the PLs. I even represented one of them in a meeting with Personnel but there was nothing the union could do against that process in general. It had been advised by regional office and as I say well before I became involved in things but certainly you know some of those who fell foul of this process thought the union should have done more to prevent it happening. Then, once people hadn't been appointed to certain posts they generally were thrown open to interview to other staff in the (department) and filled and I think two or three of those posts were filled by people who were involved with (union) in one way or another or had been involved in (union). People would say "bloody (union), they've let this happen so that their own people could benefit" which was absolute rubbish, it was just coincidence and in fact the two or three people who moved into head of subject posts hadn't really been involved in discussions about (department) restructuring anyway. They were (union) people but they weren't involved in that stuff so they

hadn't had any effect on it. But there was that general commenting. (Confidential section not relevant to main narrative)

All the other people in the union knew about it just said "bloody ridiculous – they can't say that just because someone's a union rep they can't have ambition" so again, for me at any rate, the people who counted didn't think I'd been in the wrong at all. The only thing I feel bad about it was that I have been a beneficiary of the process that I wasn't entirely in agreement with. I mean I can see why certain people were reappointed but at the same time if you get a ... ... .job that should mean something and a lot of restructurings that have taken place have taken place not because of demands of the market or anything but in order to get rid of people they wanted shot of. I sit with various interviews with the management at the (Department of E & B E) and that's what happened there. They got rid of a bunch of people that they didn't like and got a different . . . So from that perspective I wasn't very happy about the whole restructuring process that went on but in the end, yeah, I was a beneficiary.

CK: Within all that context, the process of the mapping of a particular decision has to focus down on a moment in time. So I think it should be up to you to choose the moment in time that you would want to select as being a decision.

O: The key decision I suppose for me was to go for this particular job and it happened at the point that I noticed for myself "ah, they've opened these posts to PLs in the first place but said that they'll be opened up to other members of staff if a PL doesn't go for it and well, in that case, I might do". I mean I didn't think too much about it because I assumed all posts would be filled and I was quite surprised when one of them wasn't. But certainly, having looked in that way previously, when it came up that that one was to be filled I immediately thought "yeah, if that's advertised, I am going to go for it". But that just followed on from what happened previously.

Penny

It was a case of a very good member of staff in the *F* department who – she'd been with us for three years, she'd actually applied twice to come to us from Birmingham and looked very good and at the end of three years and something had happened and it did seem from what I could glean – in fact I know because her partner came to see me – that she'd actually tried to commit suicide and thereafter she did say to me "I think I want to leave" and I suppose the decision I was involved in was that she herself seemed quite certain about this – she did actually resign – but it was her partner who came up to see me and said "I don't think M knows what she wants to do. Can you please hold the job open?" and with a lot of wangling we managed to get personnel to hold it open for a year towards the end of which I had to keep nagging her to say "are you going to come back or aren't you going to come back" and I was getting different stories from her and different stories from her partner. I mean over that year in which – it was a long decision. The difficulty was that while she was still on our books we couldn't actually employ anybody else so I suppose that was a decision that was affecting the department and running of the department and in a sense there was the quandary about going behind her back to whom I felt loyal as a kind of member of staff and her partner who had come to me in secret and sort of said "well you don't quite understand what's going on" and feeling torn. Now whether that can help you – off the top of my head.

CK: Yes, thanks very much. Do you want to give me any more details at this stage?

P: Well, the only other, I'm not quite sure what other, I mean, I'm not sure what other detail you want.

CK: That's the story as far as you're concerned.

P: That's the story. I had to hide from her the fact that her partner had been to see me privately and had told me that she had tried to commit suicide and that as a result I talked to her and said "do you know how much you're going to be missed?" so I suppose I was playing that double game which was absolutely true, I didn't go against anything that was true, you know, "we will really miss you, you've been an excellent member of staff, wouldn't you like to reconsider or leave the door open perhaps" and reluctantly, clearly, she did leave the door open but then couldn't make up her mind and I found myself with the shoe on the other foot saying "you really will have to make up your mind, M", when it was coming to the Easter time before the summer because she had a year in which to make up her mind and eventually she did, finally, after a couple of letters from me, she did actually resign and hasn't been seen of since that I know of. And I think it was that double game between her and her partner which was a little bit difficult especially as he was absolutely insistent that she shouldn't know that he'd come to see me and in fact I actually had to pretend not even to know him. So in the back of one's mind is always that question "am I being too led by what his perception is and not sufficiently led by her decision which was her decision to resign? Am I doing it for that particular reason or is it because she was a very good member of staff and if there was any chance of her coming back it would be very nice if she could?" So those are my particular thoughts.

CK: Very interesting, thank you. We're going to need to focus on one moment in time so if you could think back over that. Very often things are a process or a series of events that come together to be the situation. If you can think back over one moment time where you were actually thinking about all the sort of dilemmas around that moment time . . .

P: The main one was the middle of June when her partner had rung me up at home and said "can I come and see you about M?" and this was probably only about a week after she'd given me her resignation sort of all of a sudden. This was fairly soon after she had disappeared for a week and we heard she was in hospital with her partner ringing up and saying she will be so obviously . . there was no indication she was going to have a breakdown,

actually. I saw her in the day and she apparently went off that evening and went into a hotel and, what he said, took pills and a bottle of whisky and tried to commit suicide and how they found her eventually I don't know so I suppose it was that evening where I had to engage with him sitting in my lounge – I wasn't feeling too bright myself – and having to enlist the support of a senior member of the school and saying "for reasons I can't divulge I think there might be reasons for going to personnel and saying could we hold the job open even though she might not feel she wants to and then obviously having to speak to her and say "you know, how would you feel about this?" and the fact that she was doing it reluctantly and as I say going behind her back I suppose.

Appendix D: Summary Analysis

Subject	Decision	CK code							Total	Kohlberg		Int/ ext		
		Organisa-tional	Peer/ group	Indivi-dual	P/G Ext	Profes-sional	Socie-tal	Other	(Values)	Stage		to org	TvD	Dile-mma
Angela	To blame manager at disciplinary hearing	-6	2	1		3	-1		-1	5		-4/3	D	x
Bob	Boost business miles	7	1	6	2				16	2		8/8	0	
Colin	Whether to negotiate an illegal compensation from a contracting company	7		2	2	-2			9	2		7/2	0	
Don	To bend the rules to give preference to someone in an appointments process	8	-2	4				3	13	5		6/7	D	
Edith	To publicise a politically sensitive report	2		10					12	5		2/10	D	
Frede-rick	Recommend refusal on grounds of inadequate access	-1	2	-1		2			2	4		1/1	both	x
Gaynor	Not to instigate grievance procedure against line manager	13	10	20					43	3		23/20	0	
Helen	How hard to try in a collection for the boss - average	10	6	-9					7	3		16/-9	D	
Isabel	To report a wrong procedure for a vacancy	3		6					9	2		3/6	D	
Joanne	Not to tell employees known information around their TUPE transfers	5		-10			3		-2	(4/5) 4		5/-7	T	x
Ken	Reporting problems with data to funders	-5		15			2		12	4	(Christian)	-5/17	D	
Leo	Not to back a colleague in a risky decision	-1	2	-1					0	3		1/-1	T	x
Mark	To overrule stated redundancy policy	4		-5	-5				-6	4		4/-10	D	x
Neil	To treat one colleague the same as others	6		2		1			9	5		7/2	D	
Owen	To apply for job currently doing			1	-2				-1	5		0/-1	both	x
Penny	To try to persuade colleague to consider return to post	4	3	4					11	4		7/4	D	

Appendix D: Summary Analysis

		No. of concepts												
		Organisa-tional	**Peer/ group**	**Indivi-dual**	**P/G Ext**	**Profes-sional**	**Socie-tal**	**Other**	**Total**					
Angela	To blame manager at disciplinary hearing	4	2	6		2	1	0	15	15				
Bob	Boost business miles	4	1	6	1				12	12				
Colin	Whether to negotiate an illegal compensation from a contracting company	4	0	3	5	1			13	13				
Don	To bend the rules to give preference to someone in an appointments process	6	2	6				1	15	15				
Edith	To publicise a politically sensitive report	4	4						8	8				
Frede-rick	Recommend refusal on grounds of inadequate access	1	1	2		2		1	7	7				
Gaynor	Not to instigate grievance procedure against line manager	4	5	7		6			22	22				
Helen	How hard to try in a collection for the boss - average	4	4	3					11	11				
Isabel	To report a wrong procedure for a vacancy	6		5				1	12	12				
Joanne	Not to tell employees known information around their TUPE transfers	2		8			1		11	11				
Ken	Reporting problems with data to funders	4		6			2		12	12				
Leo	Not to back a colleague in a risky decision	2	1	8					11	11				
Mark	To overrule stated redundancy policy	3		7	8				18	18				
Neil	To treat one colleague the same as others	3		5	3				11	11				
Owen	To apply for job currently doing			10	2				12	12				
Penny	To try to persuade colleague to consider return to post	2	1	4					7	7				
									197	Total				
									12.31	Average				

Appendix E

Analysis of Angela's narrative relating to moral decisions in the workplace in relation to the underpinning values/principles identified.

Extract from narrative	Value/Principle relating to the behaviour of others	Value/Principle relating to the actions of self
Angela: To blame manager at disciplinary hearing		
She hadn't let me know . . . she refused to give me the information. There was reports and so on that had been produced that she had got copies of but wouldn't let me have them	It is wrong to withhold information which potentially puts the public at risk.	
I went right up to the head of service in the end . . . I was getting more and more concerned about it.		It is right to try to ensure that information potentially putting individuals at risk is acted upon.
Do I tell the whole truth . . . or do I blame the manager		(Summary of the problem: it's right to tell the truth but in doing so, it's wrong that someone should suffer as a result when another individual was responsible as well.)
I felt she was wrong in what she'd done	Wrong to withhold information which potentially puts the public at risk	
I felt he was wrong because he didn't do anything to sort the problem out	Wrong to withhold information which potentially puts the public at risk	

Appendix F

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Level A: Preconventional Level	Stage 1: The Stage of Punishment and Obedience	Right is literal obedience to rules and authority, avoiding punishment, and not doing physical harm.
	Stage 2: The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange	Right is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange.
Level B: Conventional Level	Stage 3: The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity	The right is playing a good (nice) role, being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow rules and expectations
	Stage 4: The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance	The right is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of society or the group.
Level C: Postconventional and Principled Level	Stage 5: The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility	The right is upholding the basic rights, values and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group.
	Stage 6: The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles	This stage assumes guidance by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow.

Summarised from Kohlberg (1981).

Appendix G

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